

TEACHING THE BIG PICTURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
IN ONE 90 MINUTE SEMINAR

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To my wife, Debby, and my sons, Nick, Ben and Tim with love

Proverbs 31:30; Revelation 21:7

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ABSTRACT

This thesis-project addresses the issue of developing in the minds of Christians a mental overview of the Old Testament. After demonstrating the need for such a mental overview, it presents a proposed manual for teaching pastors and laypeople how to grasp for themselves and effectively communicate to others the message of the Old Testament to today's listeners.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I once owned a house in which I kept a kitchen “junk drawer.” All the miscellaneous things that did not have a location of its own found its way into that drawer. It was a jumbled mess of loose items from string to pencils without erasers to half-burnt candles to small hand tools.

This thesis is submitted to address a similar but more serious phenomenon. The average person in the pews today has a mental junk drawer when it comes to the Bible. They throw into their mental drawer loose bits of Bible stories, Sunday school lessons, sermons and passages from their morning devotions all mixed together. They do not know where else to put them.

The phenomenon I am describing is prevalent in our churches today. We observe it everywhere around us. We see it in believers who do not know Elijah from Elisha, Saul from Solomon or Job from Jonah. George Barna reports that fully one third of American churchgoers cannot place Abraham, the Old Testament prophets, the death of Christ, and Pentecost in chronological order. Half of church attendees do not know the correct sequence of events of: Moses in Egypt, Isaac’s birth, Saul’s death and Judah’s exile.¹ Someone has dumped an assortment of Scripture characters, stories and passages into the

¹ Gary M. Burge, “The Greatest Story Never Read: Recovering Biblical Literacy in the Church,” *Christianity Today*, August 9, 1999, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/august9/9t9045.html> (accessed Sept. 27, 2011).

large mental drawer of the average believer's brain and it lies there at the bottom, all a jumbled mess.

Many others have been alarmed by the growing biblical illiteracy of American Christians. David Wells has declared that he has "watched with growing disbelief as the evangelical church has cheerfully plunged into astounding theological illiteracy."²

George Lindbeck, who taught theology at Yale University from 1952 to 1993, noted that during his tenure at Yale, "Those who came from nonreligious backgrounds then knew the Bible better than most of students do now that come from churchgoing families."³

Some believe that the lack of Bible knowledge is due, in part, to the absence of a cohesive Big Picture of the Bible that enables believers to comprehend what the Bible as a whole is all about and how the individual stories might fit into the overall Story. George Barna, whose research group has been chronicling the decline in Bible literacy over the last several years recently reported, "Bible reading has become the religious equivalent of sound-bite journalism. When people read from the Bible they typically open it, read a brief passage without much regard for the context. There is shockingly little growth evident in people's understanding of the fundamental themes of the scriptures."⁴

Barna and Mark Hatch have called on church leaders to instruct people in the Bible with systematic methods of instruction that enable people to adopt a biblical

² David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 4.

³ George A. Lindbeck, "The Church's Mission to a Postmodern Culture," in *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralist World*, ed. Frederic Burnham (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 44-45.

⁴ Barna Group 2009, "Barna Studies the Research, Offers a Year-In-Review Perspective," www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/325-barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective (accessed Sept. 27, 2011).

worldview that transforms their life, rather than continue to give them “disjointed morsels of spiritual truth” each Sunday.⁵ This project does not and cannot address all aspects of the problem of Biblical illiteracy. It will attempt to replace the disjointed morsels of truth with a systemic method of seeing the Big Picture of the Word of God. In particular, this project seeks to provide a framework for grasping the Bible’s story of redemption as a whole. This thesis will deal only with the Old Testament portion of the Big Picture. It is hoped that if the Big Picture of the longer and more mysterious part of the Bible can be made more understandable, then the comprehension of the shorter and more familiar New Testament will also be greatly enhanced.

There are four other chapters in this thesis-project and they will proceed as follows. The second chapter will describe the Big Picture of the Old Testament. In it, I conclude that God created humanity because He has always wanted a people to “glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.”⁶ The Bible’s story has such a beautiful beginning. But then Adam and Eve disobeyed and distrusted God. However, God soon began a rescue operation to bring back a fallen mankind by means of His incarnated Son. The first several phases of the rescue operation form the slow developing storyline of the Old Testament. It’s a protracted story with many twists and turns, detours and delays, triumphs and tragedies. God’s plan encounters many threats to its existence. So do God’s people. At the end of the Old Testament, all is ready for the Coming Hero. The second chapter will provide the Biblical foundation that under girds the thesis-project so that a person who wants to teach can teach it with the confidence that it is Biblically sound.

⁵ George Barna and Mark Hatch, *Boiling Point* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2001), 202-203.

⁶ *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, question 1, <http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html> (accessed Dec. 18, 2011).

Chapter three will review some of the best pertinent literature on the idea of the Big Picture of the Bible. It will include both scholarly and non-academic treatments of this subject. It will show that this thesis-project has a substantial basis in other research as well as briefly describe what others have done and are doing to enable people to understand the storyline of God's Word.

In chapter four, I describe the project that I have designed and taught as a seminar for believers who want to see the Big Picture of the Old Testament. The seminar starts with a brief overview of the Old Testament. A 24"x18" map that I designed is used to locate where the major eras of the Old Testament took place. I also set up the room to also serve as a map. Next, we start over from the beginning and more pointedly examine the eras or what I call the 'scenes' of Old Testament salvation history. We center on just a few key passages in each scene that bear the brunt of the Big Picture storyline. We conclude with the close of the Old Testament and how the start of the New Testament begins to bring all the pieces together in Christ. At the successful conclusion of the seminar, a participant should be able to see the development of the story of redemption as it is laid out in the Old Testament and be able to teach others by means of the materials that this project will supply.

Chapter five describes the response to the seminar when it was taught at two conferences in 2010 and 2011. The attendees were predominately church leaders: pastors, elders, lay preachers and Sunday school teachers. The majority felt that the seminar deepened their comprehension and appreciation of the scriptures.

I believe that this project will be useful to the church of Jesus Christ. It is my hope that pastors will be aided in giving their parishioners the Big Picture of the Bible. In turn,

I believe that preachers will also benefit from having their listeners be able to comprehend the central story that holds all the stories and preaching texts together. In the same way that the average person is able to dive into the middle of a familiar movie or favorite novel and quickly orient themselves as to where they find themselves in the storyline of that movie or novel, so it is hoped that a person who has been taught by this project will be able to hear a sermon preached from any part of the canon and orient themselves quickly as to where the particular passage fits in the overall storyline of the Bible. This will hopefully occur because the person can now grasp both the flow of the Bible and how the smaller pieces fit together.

In addition, it is my intention that this project will enable Christians who think that God has a large set of wonderful plans for all our lives will see that God has a plan for the ages into which he is actively fitting each of his children. By His grace, our lives have been swept up into the biggest, most important, most exciting story and truest story ever told.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is meant to supply the Biblical foundation of the project in chapter 4. Therefore, the reader should be aware that it is not a typical thesis-project chapter two. Consequently, it does not examine a select few passages for an in-depth exegetical treatment. Instead, this chapter gives the grand sweep of the Old Testament. There is a need in the church to study the fragments and small pieces of the scriptures. But there is also a need to grasp the Big Picture that all the fragments contribute too. It is the latter that this chapter attempts to fill.

This chapter is not meant to be taught in a 90 minute seminar. There is too much content here for people to digest in so short a time. My 90 minute seminar is found in chapter 4, the project design chapter. This chapter is the core exegesis from which the project was derived. Although it is much longer than the project, it is still a summary. Some books and characters will not get the attention I wish I could give them. Long stories and even whole books had to be greatly condensed. Even so, I trust that it will be deemed very useful in the teaching of the Big Picture of the Bible.

It is maintained throughout this thesis-project that the Bible is the history of God's plan of redemption, of salvation. The Bible is the record of what God ultimately wanted, how it went wrong, what God did about it and how it will all turn out.¹ The Bible reveals what God has done in order to fulfill his original intention.

God has always wanted a people that would love him and enjoy him forever that

¹ Charles Boyd, telephone interview by author, Oct. 4, 2010.

would trust him that he could say they are my people and I am their God. He would love, bless, rule, protect, provide for, teach and nurture them. They, in turn, would love, trust, obey, worship, reverence, serve and glorify Him. They would live for Him and depend on Him for every good thing. They would reflect His holy and loving nature. He would share with them everything that is in heaven and on the earth. He would forever share with them all that he is: his nature and life. No good thing would he ever withhold from them. He would never withhold Himself from them. They would know him completely even as he would completely know them. They would always be His people and he would forever be their God. They would truly “glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.” The communion between God and His people would be eternally perfect. In him, they would live and move and have their being (Acts 17:28) and from him, through him and to him would be all things (Rom 11:36). God’s people would always live in loving communion with each other as well. This is the Outcome that God has always wanted. We can be assured of this because this is exactly the relationship with his people that God in his sovereignty has accomplished for himself at the end of the book of Revelation.

In the first two chapters of Genesis, God creates everything that exists. The average Bible reader should notice that in the early chapters of Genesis where the creation of the universe is recorded that there isn’t all that much said about the physical universe. In fact, several details concerning creation are revealed in later books. These can be found scattered across the Psalms, Job, the prophets and the New Testament. More space in Genesis 1-2 is given to the creation of human beings and the establishment of the relationship between them and their Maker. The narrative quickly flies through the first five days of creation and then slows to focus more intently on Adam and Eve and what

God provides for them and expects of them.

The Bible contains many scientific truths, truths about His creation that are now verified by science but were unknown to educated men at the time. God revealed these truths to the Biblical writers long before the world of science discovered them. These include:

- The universe appeared suddenly from nothing (Gen 1:1, Ps 33: 6-9)
- The universe is made of invisible things (Heb 11:3)
- The universe is running down (Isa 51:6; Ps 102:26)
- The earth is a sphere (Isa 40:22)
- The winds form a circulating system (Eccl 1:6)
- The water cycle keeps the earth watered (Job 36:27-28; Amos 5:8)
- Ocean currents flow through the sea (Ps 8:8)
- Blood sustains life (Lev 17:11)
- The stars cannot be numbered (Gen 15:5, 22:17; Jer 31:37, 33:22)
- The stars are incredibly far from the earth (Job 22:12)
- Stars differ in magnitude (1 Cor 15:41)
- Stars produce sound (Job 38:7; Ps 19:1)
- Some stars are held together in a cluster by each other's gravity (Job 38:31).

All these facts, now confirmed by science, were first affirmed in the scriptures between ten and twenty-five centuries earlier.²

² Pensacola Christian College, *Science: Order and Reality* (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Books, 1992), 357.

Yet, the Bible is not a science book. It is a religious book and the scientific truths were intended to glorify God more than to satisfy our scientific curiosity. The opening chapters of Genesis are meant to reveal the nature of the relationship between God and mankind.

Then, in Genesis 3, the Outcome that God has always wanted is confronted with a serious problem. Adam and Eve listen to the serpent as he appeals to them to distrust and disobey the Lord. They fall away from God.

All through the scriptures, there is portrayed a people of God who have a place for them to dwell and a law for them to obey. In the first two chapters of Genesis, there are only two people and the place is the Garden of Eden. The law is short and simple: "Do not eat from a particular tree in the middle of the Garden." In effect, God had said to them, "I want you to trust and obey me. Go and enjoy the other trees in the garden, especially the tree of life. Leave just one tree alone." They did not trust Him and they did not obey this rule.

However, in the Bible, beginning at the point in which God confronts Adam and Eve with their rebellion, a plan is formulated and carried out by God. It is designed to bring about His original Outcome in spite of mankind's rebellion and sin. This plan has many steps leading principally to a Promised Redeemer who fulfills the Outcome. The plan and the redeemer are necessary because the people God created did not trust or obey Him. At that point in the scriptures, it seems that the Outcome that God wanted is completely ruined.

Pretend that you are reading the Bible for the first time starting with Genesis. In Genesis 1 and 2, we read that God created the heavens and the earth and the living things

on earth. Then God displays his loving care in the manner in which he formed the man and the woman, his special creations. Chapter 2 ends with a wedding; God brings the man and the woman together in marriage.³ The story of the Bible is off to a joyous start.

Then comes “the Fall” and by the middle of Genesis 3 it can easily seem to the reader that God’s plan is not going to work because the people he created to live with him forever will not trust and obey him.⁴ Their sin shows a lack of trust in the one who made them and has provided everything for them when they accept the serpent’s accusation that “God does not want you to eat from this tree because he knows that you will become wise like him and he is holding back something that will be to your advantage to have.”⁵ And they take the serpent’s word over the Lord God.

Dramatic consequences happened which are apart of what theologians call the Fall. Adam and Eve are alienated from God and from each other. Their first son murders their second son. Sin and death are introduced to mankind and to all of creation.

In addition to the things we always see in the Bible: a People, a Place, a Law, a Plan with a Promised Redeemer we also will very often see a Threat to the People, Place, Law, Plan or Redeemer. Sometimes the threats come from something outside the people of God in the form of famine, invasion or threatened annihilation. The Fall is the first of

³ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 130. The book of Genesis is filled with archetypes or patterns. This is one of the first. Genesis 2: displays the pattern for marriage: how man and woman become one flesh in marriage. This pattern for marriage is affirmed several times in the NT. See Matt 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; Eph 5:31; 1 Cor 6:16. Among the many archetypes of Genesis are: the pattern for the Last Judgment in the accounts of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom as Jesus himself said: “it will be like it was in the days of Noah; it will be like when Lot left Sodom and Gomorrah” (i.e. the end is going to be like it was in the beginning); the pattern for faith in that “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness” as expounded in Romans 4:1-5; the pattern of the Lamb’s sacrifice in Genesis 22.

⁴ Adam and Eve are often portrayed as the worst of people but it may be that they were the best of people--our champions like knights in the middle ages--so that when we read how they failed we understand that we all would have failed as well.

⁵ Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 188-190; John Sailhamer, *Genesis in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 91. See Rom 16:20, Rev 12:9 where Satan is called the “ancient serpent who leads the world astray.”

many 'internal threats' in which the threat springs from the people of God: evil kings and/or other unreliable members of God's people. Some of them try to worship other gods along with worshipping the Lord; some grumble against Moses or refuse to repent of sin in order to avert judgment. Often the family line of the Redeemer is threatened. In every instance, it is God who rescues the people, the land or the plan of redemption. The Bible never lacks for drama and the Lord is always the hero.

In the face of the disaster that Adam and Eve have brought about, God takes the initiative. He will bring about the redemption of his desired Outcome. The first hint is in Genesis 3:15. God speaks his first message to the first sinners (as well as speaking these words in earshot of the tempter.) Eve is to bear offspring (literally "seed")⁶ and that from her seed⁷ will come someone who will crush and utterly defeat the serpent⁸ and remove the curse that the serpent brought upon humanity. God promises that Someone is coming to destroy the devil and to redeem God's people. He is often called the messiah or the redeemer. He is the coming hero who rescues God's people.

This person is to be a male who will be "born of the woman." The scripture does not say "their" seed but only her seed. This is not someone who is born of a man and a woman but born just from woman. The seed is Eve's alone. The promised person is going to be wounded. The serpent will bruise his heel but the Seed will crush the serpent's head. The Seed is harmed but the serpent is destroyed.

This is the first hint that the Messiah is coming. Thus begins the Bible's search and rescue tale. In fact, it is the original search and rescue tale. People are lost from

⁶ The word 'seed' is singular and can mean offspring or posterity. Hamilton, *Genesis*, 199.

⁷ The singular word 'seed' can also refer to an individual and is called he in 3:15b. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 90-92; Walter Kaiser, "Sowing, Seed, Offspring," in vol. 1 of *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 253.

⁸ To "eat dust" means to be totally defeated. cf. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 90-91. See Isa 65:25, Mic 7:17.

God's design for them and they are oppressed by their own sin. But someone is coming to the rescue. He will be wounded in the fight against the evil one who brought about the situation but he is destined to win that struggle and to redeem a people for God. Who could this person be? John Sailhamer answers, "The purpose of this verse is not to answer the question but to raise it and leave it for the rest of Genesis and the Pentateuch to answer."⁹ Yes, and that question is also left for the rest of the Bible to answer.¹⁰

There is also going to be a long running war.¹¹ The people on the side of Eve's seed will hate what the serpent's people do. The serpents' seed will hate what the woman's people are. This war rages throughout the Bible. The people of God will often be attacked by their enemies without provocation. Many times, the attacks come just because there is enmity between the people who are on the serpent's side and those who are aligned with the seed of the woman.

God will come to the rescue of his people. Sometimes he allows an attack as an inducement to his people to turn against their own unrepentant sin.

Genesis 1-11 is the opening scene of the Bible in which the main characters, the dilemma and the proposed solution are established; the rest of the Bible is the denouement.

In the second scene of the Old Testament, the story of redemption begins in earnest with God's call of Abraham. Later in a New Testament letter, the Apostle Paul

⁹ Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 91.

¹⁰ "In the Bible's meta-narrative, from the moment God uttered his judgment against the serpent, the seed of the woman (the collective of those who trust God) were hoping for *the* seed of the woman (the man who would achieve the ultimate victory over the serpent). If the books of the Bible were written by and for a remnant of people hoping for the coming of this person, we would expect to find in these texts various resonations of this promise of God." James M. Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," in *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10.2 (2006), 30-54; www.sbts.edu/resources/files/2010/07/sbjt_102_sum06-hamilton.pdf. (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

¹¹ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 145.

wrote, in Galatians 3:8, that “the Gospel (concerning Jesus Christ) was preached beforehand (or in advance) to Abraham.” Paul then quotes what God said to Abraham in Genesis 12: “Through you, will all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The coming hero hinted at in Genesis 3:15 is coming from the line and family of Abraham for the benefit of the whole world; people would be left out only by their unbelief.

Abraham was promised a son when he could not have a son. In fact, that son was born when he was 100 and his wife was 90 and she could never have children when she was young. God made it clear that this was all his doing. This is not Abraham and Sara’s doing. Isaac was a miracle baby.

The promise that Abraham and Sarah will have a son of their own is linked to the promise of the Messiah when God promised to bless all the nations through Abraham (Gen 12:2-3). Abraham and Sarah will have a son when they are too old to have a son (and Sarah could never have children even when she was in her childbearing years) and that son will have a son who is a part of God’s promise and so on and so on until one of the “sons” is the Coming Hero himself who God will send to redeem mankind and to rescue the desired Outcome.

Abraham is also promised innumerable descendants and a land where those descendants will enjoy the blessings and protection of God. God does not give the land right away. In fact, it will not be during Abraham’s lifetime. The Canaanites live there. They are a wicked people but God informs Abraham that he will give the Canaanites 400 years to repent before he removes them from the land. For the time being, Abraham lives in Canaan as a rich, respected alien.

After Abraham dies, God repeats the same promises to Isaac (Gen 26:1-5). Isaac

has two sons: Esau and Jacob. God repeats the same promises to Jacob and chooses Jacob to be the family line of the Coming Hero (Gen 28:13-15; 35:12). Jacob sometimes attempts to win God's blessing by his own conniving schemes. God performs His will through Jacob anyway. At times God allows a consequence of Jacob's schemes to move forward some aspect of God's plan: as seen in the telling of how Jacob ended up with 12 sons who become the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel (Gen 27-30). Of the 12 sons, the two who are the most important to the Big Picture are Joseph and Judah. We can make a diagram look like this:

Abraham—Isaac—Jacob
 Judah
Joseph
 + 10 sons

Joseph is often remembered for his moral example. But, he is also important for the role he plays in the story of God's plan. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers and brought to Egypt. He is falsely accused and thrown into prison. While in prison, he impresses one of the king's officials by interpreting the dreams of two men as to their immediate futures. Both men's lives take the turns Joseph foresaw.

Sometime later, the king of Egypt begins to have dark and disturbing dreams that seem to portend terrible things. He inquires of his court but none of the pagan priests and sorcerers can decipher what the dreams mean. The official who has met Joseph recommends him to the king as someone who could possibly interpret the meaning of the king's dreams. God again enables Joseph to interpret the disturbing dreams of the king of Egypt. God is warning the king, in these dreams, of an impending famine which will affect the whole Middle East and God wants the king to take action to prevent a terrible human catastrophe. The king grants incredible governmental authority to Joseph so that

some of the grain from the productive years is stored and will be available to feed the people during the famine years.

The famine spreads throughout the Middle East and eventually affects Jacob and his family in Canaan. Jacob sends his sons to buy grain in Egypt. They meet Joseph but do not recognize their own brother. He immediately recognizes them. He does not treat them in the way they deserve but forgives them. Eventually all Because of his high-ranking position, Joseph is able to bring Jacob and all of Jacob's family to Egypt to be rescued from the famine. Abraham and Isaac had died long before then but these people are Abraham's descendants. They are the line of people leading from Abraham and towards the someday Coming Hero, the people of God. At that time, the whole people of God numbered 70 souls.

Judah is also important to the Old Testament story. Fee and Stuart have observed that believers can read the Bible on more than one level. We can read individual stories in the Bible and draw meaning and instruction from them.

In addition, people can also read how an individual story fits into the larger story of the Bible as a whole.¹² That is called the meta-narrative level¹³ and it is essentially what this project is about. It is on the meta-narrative level that Judah grows in importance among the sons of Jacob.

In Genesis 49, Jacob, shortly before the end of his long life, has his 12 sons come before him to receive individual blessings before he dies. The blessing that Jacob pronounces over Judah reads: "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's

¹² Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 90-91.

¹³ Richard Bauckham, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 47-53.

staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his” (Gen 49: 10).

Jacob is prophesying that there are going to be kings in Israel someday. The kings will be from one royal family or royal line. The royal line is to come from Judah. The line of kings from the tribe of Judah was to reign over Israel until “He Comes.” The line of Judah are to be kings with a small letter k but the throne belongs to one who is to be king with a capital K. In the meantime, the kings of Judah were to exercise authority for an interim period.

Let me give an example of this idea of interim kings who reign until the permanent one arrives. Sometime around 2001-2002, the University of North Carolina was looking for a championship caliber coach for their fabled basketball program which had fallen in stature. They had someone in mind. They wanted Roy Williams. He was a graduate of the University of North Carolina and had been an assistant coach at UNC but had been hired as a head coach somewhere else. Due to contractual obligations, UNC could not hire Mr. Williams. So they hired an interim coach who would be expected to keep the basketball program viable until Mr. Williams became available. The interim coach was never intended to hold the position of coach for very long. I doubt that the interim bought a house in Chapel Hill. Yet, for a short while, the interim was the coach and his players called him “coach.” When Roy Williams was available, the interim moved on. Mr. Williams became the head coach at UNC and a new era of basketball glory and NCAA championships began.

In a similar way, the kings of Judah were to be interim rulers. They were keeping the throne warm for Someone else. When the King with a capital K would come, these

other kings would no longer be needed. He would not only rule over Israel but over the world. The authority to rule the world is a God-given authority and it rightfully belongs to one Man. All nations are obligated before God to obey Him.

Soon after this, the book of Genesis ends. The final clause reads, “Joseph died and they placed him in a casket in Egypt.” The End. The first-time reader may be as startled as a TV viewer who is surprised by the unexpected phrase “To Be Continued” on their screen. Issues are left unresolved. The reader knows that the Israelites have been promised a land in Canaan but Genesis ends with the people of God in Egypt. It does not seem like that can be the end of the story. And it is not. The next book describes how they leave Egypt and head for the Promised Land. Like the couplings on a train, often one Old Testament book leads the reader right to the next one in a way that makes them want to keep reading.¹⁴

The people of Israel have been in Egypt many years at the beginning of the book of Exodus. They were brought to Egypt by Joseph and were initially treated as the special guests of the Pharaoh. But over time, the Egyptians have become alarmed at the large and fast growing Hebrew population. They have turned the Hebrews into slaves in order to control them and to make them useful for Egyptian ends.

In Exodus 2:24, we read that God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.¹⁵ It is not that God had forgotten and then suddenly recalled that he had long

¹⁴ All the books from Exodus through Joshua begin with the word “and” (the letter ו) in the Hebrew Bible. This is one device that connects the first six books together. See Marten Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 56, text and n.6.

¹⁵ Thomas F. X. Noble, “The Hebrews—Small States and Big Ideas,” CD lecture 4 of *Foundations of Western Civilization* (Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses Teaching Company, 2006). Dr. Noble noted: “The most distinctive element of the Hebrews’ religion is the idea of covenant. The God of the Hebrews is the only God who commits himself and says you can hold me to it. Zeus does not nor does Jupiter or Ra or the gods of Babylon. They do what they want to do when they want to do it and they change like the weather. They are moody and fickle and their followers can’t trust their promises. These gods make no covenants at

before made a covenant with the three patriarchs. Instead, the reader is being alerted that everything that God is about to do for his people in the Exodus story will be done on the basis of his covenant. Although his people had been forced into slavery, God's covenant was never annulled. When the time is right he acts. He had already committed himself to action for his people's sake in the covenant that God initiated with Abraham.

Through a series of miracles and special workings, God preserves the life of a young child named Moses. When Moses is a grown-up, God speaks to him in the desert, the voice of God emanating from a bush that appears to be on fire but is not consumed by the fire. God tells Moses to go to the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and demand that Pharaoh let God's people go. Pharaoh refuses. In fact, in Exodus 5:2, Pharaoh speaks disdainfully of the Lord saying, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go."

God goes to battle against Pharaoh and brings judgment on the gods of Egypt (Exod 12:12). With Moses and Aaron serving as His spokesmen, God performs 10 "wonders" against the land of Egypt.¹⁶ Sometimes they are called the 10 plagues. These wonders are disasters for the people of Egypt but for the people of Israel, whom God protects from these disasters, they are marvelous encouragements to faith and confidence in the living God. For the Egyptians, they are prods and punishments. To the Lord's people, they are wonders and signs of God's power and glory and mercy.

The Lord performed 10 wonders, one at a time. Each time, Pharaoh is given

all. The petitioner has no claim on them. He or she just hopes for pity or a good mood of the gods. The God of the Old Testament alone makes a commitment to his people and allows them to hold Him to it."

¹⁶ All these disasters seem to threaten the security and religion of Egypt. God proves 10 times to Israel, to the Egyptians and to all the nations around that He is the Lord and not the 'gods' of Egypt—which for the Egyptians included the Nile River (the first plague turns the waters of the Nile into blood) and the Pharaoh (whose son dies in the 10th plague).

another opportunity to relent and let God's people go free. Sometimes the Pharaoh flatly refuses. Sometimes the Pharaoh promises to let the people go until God stops the plague, then Pharaoh takes back his promise and will not let the people go which makes additional plagues necessary. Before the 10th and last wonder, the people of God are told to do something. They have to do it or the plague will affect them exactly as it is going to affect the Egyptians. Each household was told to kill a young lamb and prepare it for eating. The blood of the lamb was to be applied like paint on the top and down the sides of the doorframes of their houses. They were to cook and eat the lambs in their homes with the doors locked. They were to eat standing up with their coats on as if they were leaving Egypt soon. They were leaving Egypt soon. Any family of any ethnic origin in all of Egypt that did not do these things would have every firstborn male die that night. But if they obeyed, then the death of the first born would not occur. Death would "pass over" their house. Each family's slain lamb died as a substitute for the firstborn males. To repeat, if you kill the lamb as you are supposed to and eat it and do not leave any leftovers and put the blood of the lamb on the door posts, then the firstborn will live. The lamb dies so that the firstborn lives. God keeps planting the idea in the minds of his people that an innocent substitute of his choosing must die in order for the people to be redeemed.

Sudden death touched every family in Egypt that night, even Pharaoh's family. Pharaoh finally relented and let Moses and the Israelites go. They left the next day. The people of God had come to Egypt as an extended family of 70 people. They had lived in Egypt 430 years. Tens or hundreds of thousands of people departed Egypt under the leadership of Moses. In most Bible translations, Exodus 12:37 reads: "There were

600,000 men besides women and children.”¹⁷ Not every one who left Egypt with Moses was a Hebrew. Exodus 12:38 says that many non-Hebrews went with them. Apparently, the wonders became known to a wide region and people from other countries plus foreigners living in Egypt became convinced that the Lord is truly God and cast their fates with the people of Abraham.¹⁸ In this we again see that God never intended to restrict his plan of redemption to people who have the same bloodline as Abraham but includes all who have the same kind of faith as Abraham (Rom 4:9-17).

Moses did not lead the people out from Egypt. God did. God led his people by means of a miraculous phenomenon that looked a pillar-shaped cloud by day and a column of fire by night. The Lord did not take his people on the most direct route to the Promised Land, which would have been to hug the Mediterranean coast. Instead, he led them to the south towards the Red Sea. He did it to spare the people from the warfare that would have ensued by crossing Philistine territory and also to wiggle a lure that Pharaoh would not be able to resist. Pharaoh heard of the path that the Israelites have taken and believing that they are lost and disorganized, prepares his chariots for an attack to reclaim his slaves (Exod 14:1-4). One more time, God gets the glory over the gods of Egypt when he parted the water of the Red Sea and allowed the Israelites to cross through the water piled up on both sides of them like a wall of water while they passed between the walls. Then when Pharaoh’s army attempted to cross in order to attack the unarmed Hebrews, God tells Moses to wave His staff over the sea and when Moses obeys, God

¹⁷ See the New International Version, the New King James Version, the English Standard Version and the New Living Translation. However, Douglas Stuart makes a reasonable argument for translating verse 37 to read “600 military squadrons” for a number in the tens of thousands. See Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 297-303.

¹⁸ Various versions translate Exodus 12:38 as “a mixed multitude” (KJV, NASB, ESV); “many other people” (NIV); “a mixed crowd” (NRSV); “a rabble of non-Israelites” (NLT) and “an ethnically diverse crowd” (Holman Christian Standard). Cf. Stuart, *Exodus*, 303-304.

closes the miraculous channel He had made through the Red Sea and drowns the Egyptian army.

The people have been saved, both from slavery and from their enemies. They are free. They are free to be God's people. This is the great act of deliverance in the Old Testament. It is comparable to the cross in the New Testament. The Exodus is referred to many times over the rest of the Old Testament. By my count, there are at least 20 books in the rest of the Old Testament, outside of the Pentateuch, where someone looks back to the Exodus story and applies it to a new and current situation. These books are: Joshua; Judges; 1 & 2 Samuel; 1 & 2 Kings; 1 & 2 Chronicles; Nehemiah; Psalms 66, 77, 78, 80, 81, 103, 105, 106, 114, 135, 136; Isaiah; Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Daniel; Hosea; Amos, Micah; Haggai; Zechariah and Malachi. At the banks of the Red Sea, immediately after God's victory over the army of Pharaoh, Moses and Miriam composed a song praising the Lord for the salvation of his people. In Revelation 15:2-3, the song of Moses is sung in heaven.

Upon rescuing his people both from slavery in Egypt and from Pharaoh's revenge, the Lord begins to miraculously provide for the physical needs of His people. They are a very large group of people who are about to travel a long way across a barren desert wilderness. God gave them manna which was a kind of bread. They do not have to grow grain or make the manna. It just appears on the ground everyday but Sabbath day. They ate fresh manna everyday but Sabbath day. He sent them meat and when they arrived at places with no source of fresh water, he made water miraculously spring from the rocks.

Now that the Lord has saved and provided for His people, he re-establishes His

relationship with them based on the covenant that he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To do so, he leads them to a mountain in the Sinai Peninsula. There from the mountain, he speaks directly to the whole people (which terrifies them) and gives them the first section of His law, the Ten Commandments (Exod 19-20). God will later give the rest to Moses in order to teach to the people. (For that reason these laws are called the Law of Moses.)

Notice what the Lord says to Israel before he gives them any of the commandments. Here, in Exodus 20, at the start of the moral law, before he pronounces any commandment at all, he tells His people: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” He defines himself to them. He is the Lord. This is the name God gave to Moses at the burning bush when he also called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (i.e., the God of the Covenant, the God of the plan to save mankind, the God who will rescue his own eternal intentions from our sabotaging sin). Not only so but he is the Lord who has obligated himself to them so that he thinks of himself as their God. “I am ... your God.”

Not only all that, but he is the God who brought them out of slavery. He rescued them. He redeemed them. They belong to him twice over—by the original virtue of the covenant with Abraham and again by the virtue of God’s saving deed. “I saved you, you are mine,” he says in effect to them. He is also reminding them that the salvation precedes the rules. The rules did not save them. The commands will not establish the relationship between God and his people. It is already established by virtue of the covenant and the act of freeing them from bondage: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Exod 20:2).

Only then does God give them the rules of the covenant relationship. I saved you. And now that I have, here are the rules by which we are going to live together. I saved you, now here are the house rules. Now, so that we both know what to expect and so we can live together as I have envisioned it, here is what we both are going to do.

Let me give an everyday example. We are born into a family. And mom and dad had rules in your family. Cut the grass, dirty clothes go into the hamper, take turns setting the table, set the table, load the dishwasher, do not interrupt adults who are talking, say please and thank you at the dinner table, dirty laundry in the hamper, doing the dishes, tell us where you are, 10% of your allowance is for the Lord's work, you do not need to want to go to church in order to go to church with us, etc. What happens if the dishes aren't washed or the yard isn't cut or you interrupt your parents when they are talking? Do the parents bring the family to an end? Are the kids sent to an orphanage? Is the offending individual tossed out of the family? No, but children and their behavior will have to be dealt with. There will be consequences. But the rules do not establish the family relationship. The family relationship is established first and then come the rules. The rules establish the proper lines for obedience and respect as well as assist in everyone getting along in everyday life and in everyone pulling together for the good of the family.

God establishes the covenantal relationship with his people first—whether in the Old Testament or the New. He does so by his grace. Then he gives his people his rules. Here they include: “I am the Lord your God and I am holy and I do not want to be worshiped in ways that are beneath me. You may not act in any old way you please but you may act in any way that pleases me. I will be loved and honored in the way that I have decided is fitting to who I am. I do not want to be worshiped in ways that people

think up or in the ways that the people in neighboring countries worship gods who are not really gods. You must worship and obey me in the ways I tell you” (Lev 11:44-45).

God also recommit himself to what he will do for his people: “I will be your God and you shall be my people. You will be blessed and you will also be my channel of blessing to the whole world.”

In addition, God gives them rules or instructions concerning the Old Testament rituals and sacrifices. These rules are found in the rest of the book of Exodus after chapter 20 and in the books of Leviticus and Numbers. These instructions are for instruction in godly principles. They are revelation. The regulations and rituals reveal truths about God. In them, the priests and the worshipers are to perform certain actions that symbolize many of the concepts and principles that the New Testament will develop and apply explicitly to Christ. In this way, many of the truths that are found in both Testaments, are made concrete and literal in the Old Testament and are spiritualized in the New Testament.

These instructions also contain a gracious provision of forgiveness. God knows that they will not be able to keep his commands. He gives them sacrifices so that they may be forgiven for their sins.¹⁹ In the sacrifices that are given in Leviticus, there is always an innocent substitute (lamb, goat, a bull) that dies (or in one case is banished to the wilderness) so that the guilty but repentant human culprit may go free. In the Old Testament law, God implanted several religious concepts that His people needed to apprehend. First, all of life is lived out in the presence of God. Every aspect of life is of concern to their covenant Redeemer (Lev 19:14-32; 25:17-43). Second, God is

¹⁹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Towards an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 116-118.

completely holy and sin is truly repulsive to God. Sin is more than a particular act but is also a contaminant. The rigid restrictions on approaching God convey both His holiness and the people's unworthiness due to sin's contamination. Third, he establishes the idea that sin must be punished. Yet, fourth, in the Old Testament rites, God is also implanting the idea that he is merciful and forgiving and that he will take it upon Himself to provide a God-approved innocent substitute to take the punishment that the believer deserved. The sacrifice of the lamb, which God provides, puts people right with God again if that sacrifice is appropriated by faith.

God leads the people to the edge of the Promised Land. All the while, they complain constantly over one thing or another until they arrive at the outskirts of the Promised Land. When they are about to enter the land, the people refuse to believe that God will deal with the unfriendly Canaanites. Fearing defeat and death, they won't go into the land God promised them. God makes them turn back into the wilderness and wander around in it for the next 40 years until the generation of grumbling unbelievers have died and are buried in the desert. Yet the Lord still provides manna and water. He keeps their clothes and footwear from wearing out. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' last instructions to the people (with repetition of much he had already taught them.)

Here's what we should notice for now:

1. He tells as he has told them to love and serve the Lord. In chapter 28, he lays out for the nation of Israel what the results of obedience will look like and what the consequences (or curses) of disobedience will look like. The latter is much longer. Moses knows which way Israel will go. The portrait of the curses reads like a prophecy of what did in fact happen in Old Testament history.

2. Deuteronomy will be a template by which the nation and their leaders will be evaluated. Later, in the time of the kings an individual monarch will be judged as good or evil, success or failure by how closely his life and example and influence on society matched up to the commands of Deuteronomy.²⁰
3. Most important for us is Deuteronomy 18. In that chapter, Moses gives the test for a true prophet from the Lord as opposed to false prophets so that the people should not be fooled. He also prophecies that another Prophet is coming with capital P who will proclaim God's word with authority like Moses did but will also "complete the ministry of instruction and the revelation of God."²¹

Moses dies and God chooses Joshua to be the new leader. The people cross the Jordan River, in nearly identical way that they crossed the Red Sea forty years before, and come into the land. They worship and renew their commitment to the Lord and begin to claim the Land God promised from the Canaanites starting with Jericho. Jericho is utterly destroyed and everyone in it is killed except for Rahab and her family. Rahab is spared because by her words and actions she showed faith in God and allegiance to his people.

Some people question would God really tell Joshua to kill the inhabitants of the land. Some people mistakenly think that this is just an early example of religious extremism and intolerance. God could never have told Joshua to kill all those people, including the children. Allow me to defend Joshua and the people of Israel. Consider the following:

²⁰ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 64. Scholars call this the "deuteronomistic historian" meaning that the history of Israel from the books of Joshua through book of Second Kings is held up to the light of the commands and promises of Deuteronomy.

²¹ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 141-142.

1. Rahab was spared and all her friends and family that joined her. Rahab declared her faith in God and was not put to death, even though she was a Canaanite. She joined the people of God and became ancestor of the Coming Hero (Matt 1:5).
2. If the Canaanites had repented, would they not have been included? God included Rahab and all who sought shelter in her house. The vast majority of the Canaanites wanted to fight and annihilate the people of God.
3. The removal of the Canaanites is an act of God's righteous judgment. God told Abraham that his descendants would have to wait for 400 years until the sins of the inhabitants of the land had reached their "full measure." Joshua was enacting the judgment of God upon the Canaanites. We know that the Canaanites sacrificed young children to their gods. They killed infants and had their bodies built into the walls of houses and city gates in order to bring "good luck" to the inhabitants of the house and city. They incorporated gross immorality into the worship of their gods. They were an awful and vicious people. They polluted the land with detestable practices (Ezra 9:10-12). What God did for 400 years to encourage them to repent is off the biblical record.²² Their story is not told to us. It would be an eddy off of the main current of the Bible's story but obviously they did not repent and so they had to be removed from the land. They fell under the judgment of God.
4. Because the removal of the Canaanites is due to the righteous judgment of God and not the racial prejudice of the Israelites, the scriptures of the Hebrews warns them not to adopt the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites or else they will also

²² There may be scriptural hints of what God did to reach other peoples besides the Israelites. There are at least individuals if not people groups who believed: Moses' father-in-law who was called the "priest of Median." There were also Balaam (where did he get the ability to bless and curse?) and Melchizedek.

be removed from the land (Deut 8:19-20). God does not play favorites. The standard for the Canaanites is the standard for the Hebrews.

5. This was not the land of the Canaanites but the land of the Abraham's descendants because the true owner of the land gave it to them. Yet, all the earth is the Lord's. No nation ever has owned any land. It is all the Lord's to use as he sees fit.
6. This is not genocide against a defenseless people. Israel was technologically behind its neighbors. The Canaanites had more iron weapons and thereby better armed for war than the Israelites
7. In the end, the Israelites did not drive out all the Canaanites from the land God promised to them. Some of the Israelites lived in the hills and let the Canaanites keep the fertile valleys. Eventually, Israel fell under the influence of the Canaanites and had to be removed from the land for 70 years because they adopt every vile practice of the Canaanites. The consequences for not removing the Canaanites were severe.
8. The Old Testament people of Israel were the people God chose to reach the world. Through them came Christ and the gospel. It was for the salvation of the world that it was vitally important that God made sure that at least a remnant of ancient Israel retain their faith and keep from being soiled by the thinking of the world. Our salvation depended on them.

After Jericho, Joshua takes the cities in the middle of the land, cutting the Canaanite territory in two. Then Joshua carves up the remaining halves. Thirty one Canaanite kings are defeated and their main cities are taken but the rest of the job, the

mopping up, must be left to the next generation. The land is divided up into territories for the 12 tribes (clans) of Israel.

At the beginning of his promotion to leadership the Lord told Joshua to continually read the word (the first five books of the Bible) and to obey all the commands that God had given the people through Moses. God would be with him and guarantee the successful carrying out of his mission. The final assessment of Joshua comes in the middle of the book but reports that he is that he did just that: “As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses” (Josh 11:15).

Joshua’s last act is to deliver a powerful charge to the people of Israel to fear and serve the Lord. The people promise that they will. Joshua dies with a gut feeling that they will not.

The book of Judges teaches clearly that incomplete loyalty has consequences. At times, there may have been a conscious forsaking of the Lord. There was also a syncretistic mashing together of the two religions such as calling on both Baal and the Lord in times of trouble and worshipping the Lord with the objects and manners of Baal worship.

The causes of such a terrible circumstance include: mixed marriages between Israelites and Canaanites; an anxious sense that in an agricultural economy in a dry land one needed to show deference to the supposed god of rain and fertility; and the powerful appeal of Baal worship to the sensual and lower side of human nature.²³ In Judges 2:20-23, God decides that he will punish his people’s lack of faith, loyalty and obedience by

²³ Arthur E. Cundall and Leon Morris, *Judges and Ruth* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 39-40.

not driving out the Canaanites anymore. He is going to let the Canaanites stay and by that divine action, His people are to be chastised into obedience.

In the book of Judges, we see a repeating pattern.

1. The people sin by worshiping the gods of the Canaanites.
2. God punishes them by allowing one of their enemies to oppress them or rob their crops or capture some but never all of the land.
3. The people are thrown back upon God's mercy as the only means of relief from their afflictions.
4. God sends a judge (Judg 2:16-19) or deliverer (Judg 3:9-15), i.e., a leader, who succeeds by God's power and Holy Spirit coming upon them for the task at hand, even though all of the deliverers are flawed individuals with clay feet (except maybe Deborah). The greatest or most significant of the judges are Deborah, Gideon and Samson. They are not the Coming Hero.
5. The people and the land experience a time of peace.
6. After the deliverer dies, the people slip back into sin and God allows an oppressor, etc. and they have to repent again and the cycle continues—they never really break that cycle throughout this period although over time there is a general moral and spiritual downward slide.

The spiritual climate of God's people continues downward throughout the course of the book. By the end of the book we are faced with some "how did that ever get into the Bible" stories in chapters 17-21. If anyone ever films this part of the book, it will have to receive at least an R rating. They portray God's people having become as bad as the wicked people around them because they had not followed God's Word.

The author says “this is because everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (Judg 17:6, 21:25) meaning that they are not reading, teaching and following the dictates of the law that God commanded Moses. The problem resulted from lack of leadership. The author gives the solution: leadership. We need a king (Judg 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25). It is true that the leaders of Judges do not match up well with Moses, Joshua, Caleb and Phinehas in the previous generations but what kind of king can change the people from disobeying God? Not Saul nor David nor Solomon nor any of the kings to follow could do that. They needed the king with a capital K: the King prophesied in Genesis 49:10 who is the Coming Hero. The end of Judges is a cry for effective spiritual help. The author confesses that God’s people cannot keep God’s commands. Men and women need the Redeemer to come and make us right. The little book of Ruth—almost like a short story--comes next after Judges and gives us grounds for hope.

First, Ruth is a gentile from Moab. Yet, she was married in her own land to an Israelite. She is widowed while still a young wife. Her mother-in-law, Naomi, is also a widow and Ruth is devoted to taking care of her. Ruth comes to Israel with Naomi, leaving behind her family and her religion to embrace a new land and more importantly the Lord as her God. Ruth works long hours harvesting grain in farmers’ fields to support the two of them until she is noticed by a good-hearted landowner who marries Ruth and gives her and Naomi a home. The man, Boaz, is from the family line of Judah. Ruth and Boaz have a son. In fact, the book ends with the family line that Ruth and Boaz have started. The last word of the book of Ruth is the name of their great, grandson: David. Since David was to be in the line of the coming Savior, the book of Ruth shows God at work on his plan of redemption even when the people of God are going through a time of

great spiritual darkness.

David becomes beloved of the people when, as a teen, he slays the giant Philistine warrior, Goliath. David is the second king of Israel, not the first. However, David is the first king who fulfills the prophecy of Genesis 49 and he is the one that matters the most to the Big Picture of the Old Testament.

Before we speak of David, we must say that we are now at the first book of Samuel. Samuel is the last and greatest of the judges, the deliverer-leaders of their era. Samuel is also a prophet, as Deborah was before him. Although Samuel is a godly man and a good leader, the people beg God for a king who will be like other countries' kings and make them proud of him. God knew that this was a rejection not of Samuel but of Himself. God had already promised a king to the people but desire a king for wrong reasons. God grants the people their wish. He gives them a king but not someone who is from the kingly tribe of Judah. He grants them a king who tries to fulfill his enormous responsibilities on his own strength and by his own wisdom. His name was Saul and he is the first king of Israel. He tries to kill David out of jealousy and he forces David to live in exile in the desert. God let the people have their king and his reign ended in disaster. Saul and his courageous son, Jonathan, are killed in battle with the Philistines. Upon the death of King Saul, David becomes king. The northern tribes do not recognize him as king right away but in a relatively short time, David is able to win the hearts of all Israelites.

David goes well beyond Saul's efforts to establish Israel as a united kingdom, enabling the 12 tribes to think of themselves as a nation. He establishes Jerusalem as the spiritual and governmental capital of the nation. He has a modest central government but one much more organized than Saul's. He establishes a standing army rather than relying

on a volunteer force during emergencies as Israel had always done up until David's reign. He also establishes a small corps of royal prophets who are in his employ but who can be counted on to speak a word from the Lord. Last, he develops a group of musicians/worship leaders so that music is a regular part of public worship (a tradition we carry on to this day).

Israel's enemies go on the attack soon after David establishes his throne. Before every battle, David seeks God's battle plans first before he does anything else. He follows God's instructions exactly. Because he does so, David defeats all of Israel's enemies in a series of defensive wars and he is able to expand the territory of Israel from 8,000 to 80,000 sq. miles. Victory and the subjugation of their enemies secure a lasting peace for Israel. David's acquisition of a much larger territory allows Israel to at last claim the full extent of the land that God had promised Abraham (Gen 15: 18-19).

David is the archetypal king in two important ways. First, David is the archetype of what a king of Israel should be like. Future kings are compared with him whether they served the Lord with all their hearts like David (1 Kgs 11: 4-6; 14:2-2; 15:5, 11; 16:2; 22:1-2; 2 Chr 7:17, 28:1, 29:2) just as they are also compared to the summation of the law found in Deuteronomy. The books of Kings and Chronicles see little difference because David followed God with all his heart---except "in the case of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kgs 15:5).

Second, David is the archetype of the King to Come²⁴ (Isa 9:6-7, 11:1-3, 16:5; Jer 23:5, 30:9, 33:17; Ezek 34:23-24, 37:24-27; Hos 3:5). David was not the Coming Hero but he was like the Coming Hero in important ways. The Coming Hero is going to be a

²⁴ John Sailhamer, *First and Second Chronicles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 32.

lot like him. The one to come will have compassion on the poor and oppressed.²⁵ He will set things right. He will be completely victorious over his enemies which will result in a long period of peace and safety for God's people. He will do what God tells him to do and he will lead the people in the worship of God Almighty. David was a prophet. Peter calls him one in his Day of Pentecost message (Acts 2:30). The coming Messiah will also be a prophet (Deut 18:15-19).

The scriptures reveal that the Messiah will come from the line of David. When God through the prophet Nathan informed David that David's dream of building a permanent temple to replace the tabernacle would fall to David's son, the prophet had an additional message from the Lord for David: "You are not going to build a house (a temple) for me but I will build a house (a family line)²⁶ for you that will last forever." David responds by saying, "This is the law of mankind; this is the charter of salvation, the rule or law for all mankind." (2 Sam 7:19) David comprehended that God has not only narrowed the royal line of the tribe of Judah to David's family line but even more wonderfully, David's line is to be the family line of the kingly Coming Hero who is God's representative to deliver mankind.²⁷

God promised David two things:

1. David's son and every subsequent son after him, etc. would sit on the throne of Israel in an unbroken line;
2. David and his sons were to reign until one of them would rule eternally as the

²⁵ Jesus is called the Son of David 14 times (including parallel passages) especially when the downtrodden and sick plead for mercy. Matt 22 implies that the Jewish scribes understood that the Messiah would be the Son of David. cf. Dennis C. Duling, "The Therapeutic Son of David: An Element in Matthew's Christological Apologetic," *New Testament Studies* 24 (1978): 392-410.

²⁶ The second use of the word house means a royal family dynasty, such as when we say the house of Tudor or the current house of Windsor.

²⁷ Kaiser, *Towards an Old Testament Theology*, 149-155.

king from Genesis 49. In this way, David was promised an eternal line because eventually one would reign forever. The last king was to be an eternal one.

One may be able now to see that “those boring” genealogies are not really boring after all. One of their purposes was to keep track of the family lines of Israel so that those entitled to a share of the land would keep it. But more importantly, the genealogies also keep track of the true succession of the line of David. The Savior is coming out of that line. The people of God will need to know who he is when he appears. The gospel of Matthew starts with the genealogy of one who is the son of Abraham and the son of David. Luke has another version of the family tree. After that, there are no more genealogies in the rest of the Bible. HE is here now. The genealogies have done their job: prophecy fulfilled; promise kept.

Solomon is one of David’s sons and he is the next king. Solomon has his good side and his bad side. The good things include building the temple in Jerusalem and having something to do with the authorship of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

On the negative side, he has many wives (a thousand) in disobedience to God (David had more than one too) especially when so many of them are not from the people of the Lord and they introduce idolatry into the land. He allows them to build their little shrines to their gods on the hills outside of Jerusalem. The people, many of whom seem not to be able to resist idolatry, pick it up and worship these gods too. After Solomon’s death, the Lord allows the nation to split in two as a judgment on Solomon and the people.

The nation divides after only two kings who had truly united the 12 tribes and

ruled over the entire region that God promised to Abraham. The people of God are then split into two nations. Israel becomes the kingdom to the north and Judah the one to the south. The people in the north continue for about 200 years. They had 19 kings and none of them fully followed and obeyed God.

Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel built two golden calves (see Exod 32) and developed his own religious holidays and priesthood because he thought it would help strengthen his power and authority and give the people a substitute law and place of worship. In that way, he reasoned that the northern people would not need to go to Jerusalem for Passover and other festivals. Other kings are later compared with Jeroboam when they disobey God's Word. He is an archetype for godless rulers.

After he had sent many spokesmen (prophets) to call the people to return to him over a period of about 200 years, God judges the northern kingdom of Israel. He allows a wicked empire called Assyria to conquer Israel and to remove most of the people off the land and scatter them all over the Assyrian empire. This ends the northern kingdom and essentially means that there are then only two intact tribes: Judah and Benjamin. There are individuals left—some who were not wiped out or removed and some who gave up their property to move to the southern kingdom so that they could practice the true religion as given by God and worship in Jerusalem. Otherwise, after 2 Kings 17, the ten tribes of the north are gone. They are mixed in with gentiles and removed as an intact entity. Only individuals are left. The culture and society are erased.

Judah lasted for 335 years after the split with the northern tribes or about 135 years after Assyria's conquest of Israel. Judah had 19 kings in all. Eight of them are good kings. They trust the Lord and let Him guide them and they obey his word. The better

ones include Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, with the best being Hezekiah and Josiah. Yet, all have clay feet to some degree.

Eleven kings of Judah are bad. They do not listen to the Lord or obey His Word. Some actively promote the worship of idols. When the good kings are in charge there tends to be times of peace or else God comes to their rescue when they are attacked by their enemies. When the idolatrous kings are in charge, the land tends to be filled with violence, corruption and injustice (no one has more incentive to respect the lives of others than people who know the Lord) and the cronies of the king get rich at the expense of those who have few assets and little political connections.

There is more political stability in Judah. There is only one dynasty that lasts for more than 300 years: all 19 kings belong to the line of David. In comparison, the northern kingdom of Israel had 9 dynasties in its 200 year existence. The first eight changes in dynasties were due to the slaying of the king in a coup d'état and the last dynasty was brought to a close by the invasion of the Assyrians which brought the entire kingdom to an end. The good kings often bring about religious reforms by emphasizing a return to the scriptures and careful observance of God's Law and a removal and destruction of idols and shrines. The last good king is Josiah whose integrity and influence held off God's judgment.

Often times Judah disobeyed God and worshipped idols as much as Israel did. Although there are faithful prophets and some faithful kings, the general spiritual and moral trend is downward during all this period. Then after many more years of prophets and prophetic warnings, God judges Judah. He allows the Babylonian empire (who had polished off Assyria) to conquer Judah, remove large numbers of people from the land

and to scatter them throughout the empire with a significant group living in and around the capital city of Babylon. This is called the exile. The northern removal has no name and neither was there a return from it.

The lives of the kings remind one of “It’s a Wonderful Life” and other movies where you get to see the whole course of a person’s life and you know that things early in the movie will be significant. The lives of the kings are graded by means of the book of Deuteronomy. We get to see what the results are of sin and disobedience and lack of trust. We also see what happens to trust and obedience and faithfulness. We get to see the whole arc of a person’s life in just a few verses or a chapter or so. Did they do the right thing? Did they start off badly and repent and go right or did they start off well and go wrong? What made them go right or wrong? What were the consequences that we can learn from? If everyone’s life serves as a good example or as a warning, we get both in the lives of the kings of Israel and Judah.

We also see many examples of God coming through to save the promise of a Redeemer from a serious threat. As an example of this, consider a story that few people read with any interest. In 2 Kings 11, Athaliah, a Baal worshiper and the queen mother of Judah, seizes her opportunity for raw power when her son the king dies. She has the rest of the line of David murdered and proclaims herself queen. Unknown to her she missed a baby, Joash, who is secretly raised in the Temple and is restored to the throne when God’s people overthrow wicked Athaliah. What would have happened if she had killed little Joash too? There would have been no line of David for the Coming Hero from which to arise. No line of David removes any hope of the redeemer. God’s plan of salvation was in the balance when Athaliah made herself queen. Yet, again, God rescues

the line of David and the hope of the coming Davidic redeemer.

It is in the era of the divided kingdom, that what could be called the age of the prophets begins. God sent prophets to Israel before this time but during the era of Israel and Judah, he sends them in much greater numbers. A prophet can come from any of the 12 tribes but they had to be personally called by God. As Abraham Heschel observed, “No prophet sought the honor nor were they proud of attaining the status of a prophet. None seem enamored with being one.”²⁸

There were two kinds of Old Testament prophets. The first group left no books. They did not write; they were written about. We find them in the books of Kings and Chronicles and some perform miracles. The most prominent are Elijah and Elisha. They performed more miracles than anyone in the Old Testament with the exception of Moses. They call the kings and the people of the Northern kingdom to repent. The stories of Elijah and Elisha predominate over the stories of the kings who reigned during their ministries in the pages of 1 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 13 (19 chapters in all). One gets the impression that King Ahab gets so much space in order to tell how Elijah opposed him and his attempt to establish Baal worship as the official religion of the northern kingdom. The main thrust of Elijah and Elisha’s work (and Jehu whom Elisha anointed as king) was to defeat Baalism in the northern kingdom of Israel: preventing it from becoming the state religion of Israel (the religion of the kings), stop it from becoming the dominant religion of the people (the religion of the heart) and to call the people back to an unalloyed worship of their God.

The second kind of prophet, who appeared on the scene beginning with the era of the split kingdom, wrote books. These books are the last 17 books of the Old Testament:

²⁸ Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1962), 1:17-18.

Isaiah through Malachi. Note that these books are, unfortunately, not in chronological order. These prophets also called on the nation to repent. Their messages to the people were then written down and preserved as part of the Bible. Not much of their life stories are written about in Kings and Chronicles.²⁹ Of some, like Malachi, we know little to nothing of their lives. This kind of prophet came after the first kind and this kind is the more predominate in the latter Old Testament period.

The writing prophets preach the greatness of God. In their books, God is portrayed as transcendent, all-powerful and sovereign, the creator, singular, personal, faithful and passionately loyal.³⁰ The written prophets exhort the people to live up to the covenant that God established with them and faithfully upholds. They often speak words of rebuke and judgment yet we should see the mercy of God in the words of the prophets. Behind every stinging word of censure and every prediction of disaster is an appeal to repent so that God can quickly heal and restore the nation at large. Ezekiel captured it well when he preached:

But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?" (Ezek 18:21-23)

We can separate the eras and ministries of the written prophets in this way:

²⁹ Jonah in 2 Kgs 14: 25; Isaiah in 2 Kgs 19-20 and 2 Chr 26: 22; 32: 20-32; Jeremiah in 2 Chr 35-36 and Ezra 1:1; Haggai in Ezra 5-6.

³⁰ John Oswalt, "The Latter Prophets" (lecture, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL, September, 1987).

Before the exile of Israel to the Assyrians, Isaiah and Micah speak the word of the Lord to Judah and Hosea and Amos to Israel. Jonah is sent to call Assyria to repent. Ironically, of these three nations, the fullest national repentance is seen in pagan Assyria.

After the exile of Israel to the Assyrians, the nation of Judah did not seriously take to heart the fate of the northern kingdom. Judah persisted in its idolatry and injustice. Jeremiah, Joel, Habakkuk and Zephaniah call on Judah to repent in the face of coming judgment. They often look beyond their times to the glorious days ahead that God will accomplish. Around the same time, Nahum announces to Assyria that its return to idols and brutal conquest has exhausted the patience of God. Its enemies will soon totally destroy it.

As the exile begins (its fulfillment is accomplished in three waves over a 15 year period), Ezekiel speaks from exile in Babylon to God's people some of whom are with him in exile and some who are unrepentant and still living in Judah. Obadiah preaches right after the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BC.

After the return from the exile, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi encourage the discouraged returnees and exhort the complacent among them.

Although the prophets do more exhorting than predicting, they do make predictions. These prophecies fall into three main groupings:

First, the exile. The prophets tell the people of Judah, "You are going to Babylon; you have sinned against God and you must leave the land God promised you for 70 years." The people are not to fight this but to accept it as the discipline of the Lord. They'd rather fight.

Second, the Return from exile. "You will be brought back to the land God

promised you. You will be in exile for 70 years (Jer 29:10-12). You are being disciplined; you are not being rejected.”

Third, the long-term future is glorious: “The Messiah is still coming. The Coming Deliverer is still coming and here are a lot more details about Him.” The covenant and the promises begun in Genesis 3 and to Abraham in Genesis 12, et al. will not be cancelled because of Israel’s sin.

The people generally do not believe that they are going into captivity. They trusted in their status of God’s chosen people and assumed that that would trump their lack of righteousness. Generally, the people do not appreciate the prophets who tell them these things but there is still a respect and tolerance for the prophets, probably due to the power and ring of truth to the prophets’ words and also God’s protection of the prophets.

After Judah is exiled from the land, the people generally do not believe they will come back. It was Assyria who removed the people of the northern kingdom and Babylon who removed the people of the south and everything that the Israelites knew of Assyria and Babylon told them that removed people from other lands never came back.

Besides trusting in their status, the people and their kings trust in false prophets who say what people wanted to hear. They also trust in a declining Egypt to come rescue them from the invading Babylonians. In the end, the army of Egypt does not even show up.

The third group of predictions, concerning the Messiah, is really quite amazing.³¹ The prophets tell us that the coming Hero will be born of a virgin in Bethlehem (Isa 7:14, Mic 5:2). At some point in time he will ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9). He

³¹ Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 164-202.

will be betrayed by a close associate (Ps 41:9). He will be beaten, mocked and spat upon (Isa 50:6). His hands and feet will be pierced (Zech 12:10; Ps 22). He will establish a new covenant that accomplishes the designs of the old covenant (Jer 31:31-34). He will die for the sins of the people—as their Innocent substitute (Isa 53). He will live again after he dies (Zech 13:1). Then sometime relatively soon after his death, some people who witnessed his death will see an invasion of gentile armies who will surround Jerusalem, kill many people and destroy the city (Zech 13:8-14:2). This last prophecy anticipated what Rome did to Jerusalem in A. D. 70. In some passages, such as Isaiah 53, the prophet employs the past tense because the things that the Lord told him to prophesy are so certain to happen that they can be spoken of as if they have already happened. They have already been decided upon.

The coming hero will have to fit all these predictions like a person's nine digit zip code fits their house. The first five digits are either your town or your side of town. The last four numbers narrow it down to one house or apartment of all the buildings in America. These prophecies are like that. You add them up and they can only point to one individual among all the people who have ever lived upon the face of the earth. One person and no other.

During the exile, Daniel and three friends serve King Nebuchadnezzar and later King Darius of Persia. The book of Daniel illustrates God's watchful care over faithful believers who find themselves in ungodly environments such as the exile. The book also shows God's sovereignty over nations and history and anticipates his final victory over evil.

After 70 years, God's people begin their return to the land. A century or so before,

the people who did not believe the prophets had been right about Babylon never allowing captive peoples to return to their homelands. However, God raises up the Persian empire to replace Babylon and the Persians allow the Jews to go home. The king of Persia even picks up the tab.³² God names the king of Persia, Cyrus, long before he was born or before there was a Persian empire (Isa 44:24-45:7).

The returnees to Judah build a second temple in Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest. This is recorded in Ezra 1-6 and the books of Zechariah and Haggai. Sometime later, Ezra and Nehemiah see to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and its walls. They also are concerned to address the rebuilding of the spiritual life of the community of the returnees and press the people to obediently follow the Lord (Ezra 7-10; Neh 1-13).

Sometime after the return to Judah, a threat to wipe out all Jewish people, coming from within the Persian Empire, is thwarted by the unseen hand of God working through two Jews, Esther and Mordecai, whom God has placed in high ranking positions within the Persian Empire. Although, it is never explained why believers like Esther and Mordecai did not return to Judah when they could have, God does not rebuke them. In fact, he allows Esther to become the queen of Persia in order to rescue his people. Esther, like Daniel, illustrates how to faithfully follow the Lord while serving pagan leaders in a sometimes hostile environment.

Haggai encourages the people to rebuild the temple. Zechariah gives multiple encouragements to rebuild God's temple: God is with you and will bless you. Some of

³² Of all the nations conquered by the Assyrian or Babylonian empires and are allowed to return to their lands by the Persian Empire, only the Jews go back to their homeland.

your enemies will be punished and some will turn to the Lord. Malachi reminds the returnees, "Your God whole-heartedly keeps the covenant, so should you."

Malachi closes the Old Testament with the promise that the Messiah is nearer than ever and that he will be preceded by a messenger who will announce his arrival to the nation. This messenger will remind people of Elijah.

In some way, the Old Testament concludes without an ending. Loose details must be resolved and the promised Hero must still come.

The subject of the Old Testament is God. And although the full revelation of the Three Personhood of God is left for the New Testament, yet we see the coming Redeemer is revealed to be divine. The complement is harder to express but, most of all, it centers on the saving acts that God has done to actively bring to completion his redemptive plan.

Therefore, I will state the Big Idea of the Bible as thus:

"The Triune God is working to create, from disobedient sinners, a redeemed people whom He can live with and bless and who will love Him and each other forever."

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

People in America do not know the Bible as they once did. There has been a terrible erosion of biblical knowledge among the general population.¹ This trend of ignorance about God's Word has been written about and discussed for many years now and it is usually labeled as "Biblical illiteracy." A Google search with that phrase produces hundreds of thousands of hits. George Barna has reported that there is "virtual total ignorance of the history of the Bible" and that the "content of the Old Testament is a mystery to most adults."²

Even more shocking is the observation from many pastors and scholars that Christians in America do not know the Bible very well either. Professors Gary Burge, of Wheaton College and George Lindbeck, of Yale University, have noted that in recent years, Christian young people are coming to college with a poor grasp of the scriptures. Burge asserts that biblical illiteracy is at a crisis level not just in the non-Christian culture but in the church.

¹ These include: <http://www.Biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/09/Biblical-Illiteracy.aspx>; <http://home.snu.edu/~HCULBERT/literacy.htm>; <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/005/606lxbg.asp>; <http://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2007/08/ignorance-is-bliss-biblical-illiteracy.html> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

² George Barna, "Bible Reading in America" Barna Research Group (November 1994), quoted in Chuck Colson, "Joan of Arc was not Noah's Wife," Breakpoint Online (December 26, 1995) <http://www.breakpoint.org/commentaries/3972-joan-of-arc-was-not-noahs-wife> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

“If it is true that biblical illiteracy is commonplace in secular culture at large, there is ample evidence that point to similar trends in our churches,” Burge stated.³

Lindbeck believes that in the 1950’s and 1960’s, students from “nonreligious backgrounds knew the Bible better than most of those now who come from churchgoing families.”⁴

Greg Thornbury, who teaches Bible survey courses as a dean at Union University in Jackson, TN, reports that his predominately Christian students do not know their Bibles.

“There have been some moments where I’m talking about a biblical story and am getting that stare like, ‘I’m not really following you here.’” Thornbury commented that he began to realize that “teaching what happens in the Bible, story for story, scene for scene, is just not something that is really being done that well in churches.”⁵

Much of the biblical illiteracy must result from a lack of reading the Bible on a regular basis. George Gallup reported in 2000 that 16% of Americans read the Bible daily and that 41% do not read it at all.⁶

Yet much of the illiteracy stems from the lack of seeing the Big Picture of the Bible. Cullen Schippe, author of *The Bible and Its Influence*, tells the story of a time that he once picked up and read a copy of the Book of Mormon in a hotel room and found

³ Gary M. Burge, “The Greatest Story Never Read: Recovering Biblical Literacy in the Church,” *Christianity Today*, August 9, 1999, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/august9/9t9045.html> (accessed Sept. 27, 2011).

⁴ George A. Lindbeck, “The Church’s Mission to a Postmodern Culture,” in *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralist World*, ed. Frederic Burnham (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 44-45.

⁵ Baptist Messenger Staff, “New Website Targets Biblical Illiteracy,” *Baptist Messenger of Oklahoma*, posted Nov. 15, 2010, <http://baptistmessenger.com/new-website-targets-biblical-illiteracy/> (accessed September 28, 2011).

⁶ Alec Gallup and Wendy W. Simmons, “Six in Ten Americans Read Bible at Least Occasionally,” Gallup News Service (October 20, 2000), <http://www.gallup.com/poll/2416/six-ten-americans-read-bible-least-occasionally.aspx> (accessed November 19, 2011).

some of the characters to be familiar to him but the overarching story “befuddled him.” Then it occurred to him that this is how a growing number of people “now see the Bible.”⁷

Gary Burge reported that the faculty of Wheaton College, near Chicago, IL, has for several years monitored the biblical literacy of incoming freshmen. They discovered that one-half of their new students could not put “Moses in Egypt, Isaac’s birth, Saul’s death and Judah’s exile” in correct biblical order.⁸ If these students do not know the sequence of Biblical events then it is reasonable to assume that it is because they do not know the storyline of the Bible.

In an online article for the Lausanne Movement, entitled called “Biblical Literacy causes Biblical Transformation”, the Rev. T. Babu Rao wrote that here is an “imminent need to address this rising crisis of biblical illiteracy” by coming up with “intentional, effective chronological Bible study lesson plans. This alone would help church goers to perceive and understand the Bible as a single story of redemption.”⁹

In an article entitled, “Why Johnny Can’t Read the Bible,” several pastors and Bible professors told the reporter that they are noticing that many Christians today know Bible names, places and individual stories but struggle to put the names, places and stories together and “understand the Bible as a single story of redemption.” One such professor, Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School, believes the problem stems from

⁷ Collin Hansen “Why Johnny Can’t Read the Bible,” *Christianity Today*, May 2010, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/may/25.38.html> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

⁸ Burge, “The Greatest Story Never Read,” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/august9/9t9045.html> (accessed Sept. 27, 2011).

⁹ Rev. T. Babu Rao, “Biblical Literacy Causes Biblical Transformation,” Lausanne Global Conversation website, posted May 31, 2010, <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/10349> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

the fact that upon arriving on campus, his divinity students have had no one “explain the Bible as a connected story.”¹⁰

Sandra Richter, an Old Testament professor at Asbury Seminary, believes that the average Christian’s understanding of the Old Testament is a jumble of stories, characters, dates and place names. “The problem is one of order,” she writes, “Until a believer is able to organize what they know about the Old Testament meaningfully, they cannot use it.”¹¹

Thus, it can be said, that a consensus exists that a part of the problem of Biblical illiteracy is the lack of a mental overview, a Big Picture of the Bible. Far too many Christians know a collection of Bible characters and stories but are not able to grasp the Big Story that holds all the little stories together and in fact makes sense of them. They know a jumbled collection of Bible parts that do not fit together in a discernible and organized pattern. They have a “mental junk drawer” picture of the Bible but they need a Biblical filing cabinet. They need to see the Big Picture. Giving Bible readers a Big Picture of the scriptures could help solve so of the terrible problem of Biblical illiteracy among Christians.

Fortunately, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in discovering a Big Picture of the Bible and a subsequent response by many authors attempting to supply a Big Picture. Rev. Charlie Boyd, author of *What God Has Always Wanted*, says that 10 years ago when he first became interested in this topic he could only find two or three books written on a popular level that addressed the overall point of the Bible. The principle books then were Graeme Goldsworthy’s *According to Plan* and Vaughn

¹⁰ Collin Hansen “Why Johnny Can’t Read the Bible,” *Christianity Today*, May 2010, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/may/25.38.html> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

¹¹ Sandra Richter, *The Epic of Eden* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 19.

Roberts' *God's Big Picture*. One could add *The Unfolding Mystery* by Edmund Clowney, *Understanding the Bible* by John Stott and *Towards an Old Testament Theology* by Walter C. Kaiser. Only Stott's book was written for lay people but unfortunately, it has gone in and out of print over the years and was sometimes hard to find. Rev. Boyd, author of *What God Has Always Wanted*, a book that relates the Big Picture of the Bible for children (see p. 71), estimates that there have been 20 or 30 Bible overviews published in the last decade.¹²

The following resources are offered because they have been helpful to this project and will offer help to anyone who reads this project and senses a call and desire to teach the Big Picture of the Old Testament to others. We will start with the resources cited above. Then we will assess some of the more recent resources. The comments on each resource are not meant to be considered book reviews as such. Instead, these resources are assessed in this chapter as to their helpfulness in forming and teaching an Old Testament overview.

According to Plan by Graeme Goldsworthy

Goldsworthy's book, *According to Plan*¹³, does not boil down the Old Testament into an outline. Instead, it traces certain theological themes as they were progressively disclosed in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The one theme above all themes is the Kingdom of God. First, the Kingdom was revealed in the history of Israel and preached by the prophets. It was fully revealed and fulfilled in the coming of Jesus

¹² Charles Boyd, telephone interview by author, Oct. 4, 2010.

¹³ Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991).

Christ.¹⁴ Goldsworthy endeavors to show how each theme is developed in the Bible, then how it is fulfilled in Christ and the coming of the Kingdom of God and then applied to the Christian life of faith. In other words, in his view, what holds the Bible's story together is the gospel itself. "Jesus Christ is the link between every part of the Bible and ourselves."¹⁵

Goldsworthy devotes chapters 8-25 to exploring major theological themes as they begin to emerge from the Old Testament and are re-interpreted in the New Testament in terms of Jesus Christ. Some of the themes that are handled with the most depth are Creation by God's Word, Abraham as our father, the Exodus, covenant and entering the Promised Land. He generally takes each theme in its turn as it first appears in the pages of the scriptures. Each chapter concludes with a summation, a brief discussion on how the theme links to Christ and a list of materials for further reading. Relating the Old Testament to the New so that the reader can gain an appreciation of the whole Bible is probably the book's greatest strength. Although *According To Plan* was intended to be written for ordinary Christians,¹⁶ it has had its most telling influence on pastors and upon other Christian writers such as Vaughn Roberts.

God's Big Picture by Vaughn Roberts

Roberts' book aims to help Christians find their way around the Bible and to see

¹⁴ Graeme Goldsworthy, "Biblical Theology as the Heartbeat of Effective Ministry" in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, Scott J. Hafemann, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 280-286.

¹⁵ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 71-78.

¹⁶ Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 7-9.

how it all holds together and points us to Jesus.¹⁷ Some have called this book “Goldsworthy lite,” thinking of it as a simplified version of Graeme Goldsworthy’s approach to biblical theology. Roberts admits that as much, saying, “Anyone who has read *Gospel and Kingdom* (Goldsworthy’s first Old Testament overview before he wrote *According to Plan*) will see its influence in these pages.”¹⁸ Both writers see Scripture as a unified and interconnected work. Roberts explains: “The Old Testament on its own is an unfinished story; a promise without a fulfillment. We must read on to the New Testament if we want to know what it really means. And the New Testament constantly looks back to the promise it fulfills.”¹⁹

God’s Big Picture sees the kingdom of God as the unifying theme that shows how the Bible fits together. Roberts did not try to force a central theme upon the Scriptures but tried to allow a central theme that sufficiently encompassed the Bible to emerge from it. This theme would also allow each part of the Bible to make its own “distinct contribution” to the overall theme.²⁰ He believes that the Kingdom of God is the Scriptures’ central theme. Furthermore, “God’s kingdom was the dominant theme in Jesus’ teaching.” The kingdom of God is understood to be presented throughout Scripture as “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule and blessing.”²¹

In eight chapters, the book traces the kingdom motif throughout the Bible. Five of the eight concern the Old Testament. ‘The Pattern of the Kingdom’ introduces us to elements of the kingdom idea by looking at Genesis 1:1-2:25. ‘The Perished Kingdom’ (Gen 3) shows the results of man’s rejection of God’s kingdom. ‘The Promised

¹⁷ Vaughn Roberts, *God’s Big Picture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002).

¹⁸ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 10.

¹⁹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 19-20.

²⁰ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 20.

²¹ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 21.

Kingdom' (Gen 17:1-8; Gal. 3:6-14) focuses on God's promises of salvation. It particularly emphasizes God's covenant with Abraham, which promised a people, a land, and blessing, and shows that, from the start, the kingdom of God was intended to include Gentiles as well as Jews.

'The Partial Kingdom' (a lengthy chapter that has to cover a lot of ground) looks at Genesis 12 to 2 Samuel 7 following God's promise of a king and the kingdom motif throughout the history of Israel. 'The Prophesied Kingdom' focuses on the role of the prophets in announcing the coming fulfillment of the promises of the kingdom of God.

Understanding the Bible by John Stott

*Understanding the Bible*²² has several benefits. First, Stott ably relates the overall flow of the Bible's story in a concise and accurate manner. He spends a chapter on each testament and a concluding chapter that ties the Biblical story together in terms of themes such as salvation and redemption. The story of the Bible is shortened but not distorted.

Second, Stott shows his readers that the Bible's history is different than modern history. It is not a full account of all the facts of the period of time in which the Old Testament took place. It is not a history of ancient Israel. Instead, it is the narrative of God's dealings with a particular people for a particular reason from the point of view of God.²³ That is why some Old Testament people such as Lot or Rahab or Samson have a significant portion of the Bible written about them. Lot plays a prominent role in Gen 13,14 and 19. Rehab's story is told in Joshua, chapters 2 and 6, while all of Judges 13-16

²² John Stott, *Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979).

²³ Stott, *Understanding the Bible*, 59-60.

is devoted to Samson. These individuals are relatively minor historical figures in the overall history of ancient Israel. However, they are important to the overall Big Picture of the Old Testament.

On the other hand, historians consider King Jeroboam II to be the ‘Napoleon of the Northern Kingdom.’ He reclaimed almost all the territory that previous kings of Israel had lost. His 41 year reign was the economic and military high point of the northern 10 tribes. Yet, because he did nothing to stop the sin and idolatry of his country, he is deemed a failure and his entire reign is summed up in negative terms in a mere seven verses (2 Kings 14:23-29).

Another benefit is Stott’s grounding of the Biblical story in its historical time and place. Stott conveys to the reader that God revealed himself Person-to-person to flesh and blood human beings like us who actually lived in a certain place at a certain time. As Stott says, “God’s revelation was not given in a vacuum but in an unfolding historical situation, through a nation called Israel and a person called Jesus Christ. It must never be divorced from its historical context; it can be understood only within it.”²⁴ Stott writes an entire chapter on the geography of the Bible in order to convey the concreteness and reality of the area in which the Bible’s story took place.

Fourth, Stott shows that the fundamental relationship between the Old and New Testaments is that of promise and fulfillment. He gives several examples that show that Christ believed that the Old Testament was about him.²⁵

²⁴ Stott, *Understanding the Bible*, 59.

²⁵ Stott, *Understanding the Bible*, 18.

The Unfolding Mystery by Edmund Clowney

Edmund Clowney describes the purpose of this book as offering a “guide to the underlying story of all the stories, so that we may see the Lord of the Word in the Word of the Lord” and the subtitle tells all: ‘Discovering Christ in the Old Testament.’²⁶ As Clowney rightly said, “It is possible to know Bible stories, yet miss the Bible story.”²⁷

Clowney begins with the story of Adam and Eve and then continuing with many of the major Old Testament figures such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon, he explains how Christ is seen in the Biblical passages concerning these characters. He clearly shows that the stories of the Old Testament characters were not given by God in order to teach moral lessons, but serve as parts of a great story that climaxes in Christ. Therefore, the Old Testament has a unified storyline that finds its culmination in Christ.

For example, Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac points to Christ in that:

- The location where Abraham was called to sacrifice Isaac is the same place where Jesus was later crucified. In the place where Abraham was spared from giving up his son, God would not spare His own Son.
- The theme of "The LORD will provide" which runs through the account, culminates in the provision of an innocent animal to take Isaac's place. This is a picture of substitutionary sacrifice.
- The typology of Abraham’s sacrifice enables us to more fully “understand the depth of meaning in the New Testament teaching about God’s love in giving His Beloved Son.”²⁸

²⁶ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1989).

²⁷ Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery*, 11.

²⁸ Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery*, 51-59.

Kaiser's book²⁹ was originally written for the scholarly world which had given up the idea that the Old Testament has a Big Picture or as Kaiser calls it a "center." The first 70 pages is a history of Old Testament scholarship in order to advance the idea that the Old Testament has a center or a central theme that runs through the Old Testament and holds the Old Testament together against what Kaiser anticipates will be a critical onslaught disparaging the very idea.

He then examines the Old Testament books in the chronological order in which they may have been written and discovers the theme of the promise running through the Old Testament. The promise was first stated to Abraham, repeated to each of the patriarchs and was later embellished with the law given to Moses and the promises pronounced to David. The core of the Promise first stated to Abraham is what Kaiser calls the tripartite formula in which God vows: "I will be your God, and you shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of you." Passages in which the tripartite formula can be seen include Exodus 20:2, Leviticus 18:4, Numbers 15:41, Deuteronomy 5: 6, Judges 6:10, Psalm 81:10, Isaiah 41:13, Ezekiel 20:5, Hosea 13:4 and Joel 2:27. In fact, Kaiser claims that it is restated, repeated, and developed in every Old Testament era and that it forms the basis of salvation history.

Kaiser's eleven Old Testament eras are:

1. Prolegomena to the promise: Prepatriarchal
2. Provisions in the promise: Patriarchal
3. People of the promise: Mosaic era

²⁹ Walter Kaiser, *Towards an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978). This book is now entitled *The Promise Plan of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008) with a new section that examines the development of the Promise idea throughout the New Testament.

4. Place of the promise: Premonarchical era
5. King of the promise: Davidic era
6. Life in the promise: Sapiential era (Wisdom Literature)
7. Day of the promise: Ninth century
8. Servant of the promise: Eighth century
9. Renewal of the promise: Seventh century
10. Kingdom of the promise: Exilic prophets
11. Triumph of the promise: Post-exilic prophets

Kaiser's book is marked with solid exegesis. He persuasively shows that the idea of the promise holds the Old Testament together as one big story. His treatments of the promises to Abraham and to David are excellent. His book is a great aid to someone teaching an overview of the Old Testament.

A person using Kaiser's book, however, may want to modify the second half of his outline. The first five points of his outline do well in advancing the storyline of the Old Testament but his last five eras do not advance the Old Testament story. They merely list the separate centuries in which the writing prophets lived. For example, something such as "The Promise Lives On As The Kingdom Divides" would describe the seventh Old Testament era more fully than does "Day of the Promise: Ninth Century."

What the Bible Is All About by Henrietta C. Mears

This book primarily is a collection of summations of each individual book of the Bible.³⁰ It seeks to show how Christ is portrayed in each book. It does a much better job explaining the individual books of the Bible than in giving a framework picture of the whole Bible.

³⁰ Henrietta C. Mears, *What the Bible Is All About* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2002).

Mears' book gives two similar but not identical outlines. Putting the two together and smoothing out the differences, her outline would look like this:

- I. Period of the patriarchs: Adam to Moses
 - A. The Godly line—leading events
 - 1. Creation
 - 2. The Fall
 - 3. The Flood
 - 4. The Dispersion
 - B. The chosen family—leading events
 - 1. The call of Abraham, Genesis 12-25
 - 2. The descent into Egypt—bondage
- II. Period of great leaders—Moses to Saul
 - A. Exodus from Egypt
 - B. Wandering in the wilderness
 - C. Conquest of Canaan
 - D. Rule of the Judges
- III. Period of the kings—Saul to the Captivities
 - A. The United Kingdom
 - 1. Saul
 - 2. David
 - 3. Solomon
 - B. The Divided Kingdom
 - 1. Kings of Israel
 - 2. Kings of Judah
 - 3. Fall of Israel
 - 4. Fall of Judah
- IV. Period of foreign rulers: Captivities to Christ
 - A. Captivity of Israel
 - B. Captivity of Judah
 - C. Restoration under Persian kings³¹

A person wanting to use *What the Bible Is All About* for grasping the Big Picture might find more help in what she called the “great facts of the Bible in order.” Seventeen

³¹ Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 19-20; 167-169.

principal Old Testament facts are cited, the order of which describes the Old Testament Story:³²

1. Creation, Genesis 1-2
2. Fall of man, Genesis 3
3. Deluge, Genesis 6-9
4. Babel, Genesis 11
5. Call of Abraham, Genesis 11:10-12:3
6. Descent into Egypt, Genesis 46-47
7. The Exodus, Exodus 7-12
8. Passover, Exodus 12
9. Giving of the Law, Exodus 19-24
10. Wilderness wanderings, Numbers 13-14
11. Conquest of the Promised Land, Joshua 11
12. Dark ages of the chosen people, Judges 1-21
13. Anointing of Saul as king, 1 Samuel 9
14. Golden age: the united kingdom of David and Solomon,
2 Samuel 5; 1 Kings 10
15. The divided kingdom—Israel and Judah, 1 Kings 12
16. The captivity, 2 Kings 17; 25
17. The Return, Ezra

The list works as a rough outline of the Old Testament. It could be reduced to an easier set to handle by combining facts such as 1-4 or 6 and 7 into one step of an Old Testament outline. For instance, 1-4 can be easily combined. One might want to add something from the prophets to form a closer link to the New Testament than “the Return.”

In addition, Mears’ list of the 12 principal places around which the history of the Old Testament is written is helpful in forming an outline of the Old Testament:³³

1. Eden
2. Ararat
3. Babel
4. Ur of the Chaldees
5. Canaan (with Abraham)
6. Egypt (with Joseph)
7. Sinai

³² Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 18-19.

³³ Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 18.

8. Wilderness
9. Canaan (with Joshua)
10. Assyria (captivity of Israel)
11. Babylon (captivity of Judah)
12. Canaan (Palestine—return of the exiles)

As one builds the story of the Bible around these places one sees the whole history in chronological order. Mears concluded that maps are “indispensable at helping students to visualize and localize important geographical areas.” Anyone who has spent a half-hour examining the maps at the end of a Bible can see that Mears is correct. Maps can represent the order of the Bible’s story if they are presented in chronological order. The plot of a movie or book can be more easily recalled if one remembers the sequence of the where the scenes take place. People even do that with their memories: “Grandma did not come to live with us until after we moved to the new house.” Mears’ comments convinced me that a series of maps or one good Bible map that a person can mark in sequence while they speak can help people visualize the sequence of Old Testament events.

There are some recent resources that may also help someone learn and teach a Big Picture of the Bible. Some aim to give average folks a manageable overview of the Old Testament. Some do not. All of the following present a comprehensive picture of the Old Testament.

The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story
by Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen

In a well-regarded lecture given in 1989 and in a subsequent article, New Testament scholar N. T. Wright compared the Bible to a (hypothetical) newly discovered

Shakespeare play whose fifth act had been lost. Wright supposed that highly experienced Shakespearian actors could immerse themselves in the first four acts and over time work out the fifth act and bring it to a proper resolution. Wright named the first four acts: (1) Creation; (2) Fall; (3) Israel; (4) Jesus and designated the New Testament as the first scene of Act 5, giving hints, especially in 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation, how the play is supposed to end.³⁴

Bartholomew and Goheen³⁵ adapted N. T. Wright's five act play comparison of the Bible into a six act outline. Their six acts of the Bible are:³⁶

Act 1	God Establishes His Kingdom	Creation
Act 2	Rebellion in the Kingdom	The Fall
Act 3	The King Chooses Israel	Redemption Initiated
	Scene 1 A People for the King	
	Scene 2 A Land for the People	
<i>A Kingdom Story Waiting for an Ending</i>		<i>The Inter-Testamental Period</i>
Act 4	The Coming of the King	Redemption Accomplished
Act 5	Spreading the News of the King	The Mission of the Church
Act 6	The Return of the King	Redemption Accomplished

This is a very informative and insightful book. The main problem it has is what it shares with Wright's outline of the Bible in that they borrow the structure one finds in the classic dramatic play and then attempt to make the Bible fit that outline instead of allowing their outline to naturally emerge from reading the Bible. Their outline also stuffs most of the Old Testament story into just two scenes in Act 3.

³⁴ Wright, N. T. "How Can the Bible be Authoritative," *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991): 13-14, http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Bible_Authoritative.htm; [http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/blue_files/How can the Bible be Authoritative.pdf](http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/blue_files/How%20can%20the%20Bible%20be%20Authoritative.pdf) (accessed Sept. 28, 2011). Wright's metaphor has been very influential and several recent authors give their overview of the Bible in either five or six acts.

³⁵ Bartholomew, Craig and Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004).

³⁶ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 25- 27; 197-8.

Mr. Goheen especially promotes the idea of the Bible's Big Story to audiences around the country. The two authors have developed a free website containing many helpful articles, Power Point slides and resources for adult Bible classes.³⁷

Dynasty and Dominion by Stephen Dempster

Stephen Dempster's enlightening book³⁸ takes a literary approach to show that the Old Testament is not just a collection of texts but a unified text. Dempster shows that there is a unity of key concepts throughout the Old Testament which he points out is something that is recognized within the canon. The Old Testament authors believed that, within its pages, the promises and prophecies and portrayals of who Yahweh is cohere to each other.

Following an order of the Hebrew Bible, Dempster does a wonderful job of showing the intertextual connections as they progressively developed across many canonical books. Building on the work of David Clines,³⁹ who demonstrated that the structure of Pentateuch reveals an interconnected unity, Dempster gives literary evidence of intertextuality within the whole Old Testament. For instance, creation, exile and return are sequential themes that first show themselves in the story of Adam and Eve but are also recurring themes throughout the Old Testament. The tracing of key theological and literary themes is the book's most powerful argument for the Old Testament being one text with one overarching story.

³⁷ <http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/about/articles> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

³⁸ Stephen G Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003).

³⁹ David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1997), 9.

In his opinion, two main themes run through the Old Testament: dominion and dynasty. He also refers to them as geography and genealogy. (Dempster likes alliteration and employs it frequently!) In the opening chapters of Genesis, God created Adam and Eve to be the first of His people and placed them in a special piece of land although they were also given dominion over all the earth. Sin disturbed God's plan but calling Abraham out from Ur, God designates a land that Abraham's descendants are to have dominion over. In Genesis 17, God announces that kings are to come from the line of Abraham and Sarah. Eventually the Old Testament narrows its focus on the person of David, while still looking forward to a perfect king to come from the line of David. Dempster's outline of the Old Testament sees the narrative books telling the story of salvation history which is broken up from time to time with chunks of 'commentary' on the action provided by the Prophets and the Poetic books.

It makes sense that Dempster, an Old Testament scholar, would follow the Hebrew order of the Old Testament books as opposed to the order of books in Christian Bibles which follow the Septuagint. Therefore, Chronicles is the last book of the Old Testament. The close of the Old Testament for him is not Malachi looking for the forerunner to the Messiah but the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple.

God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment by James M. Hamilton Jr.

In his recently published book, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment*,⁴⁰ Hamilton takes a literary approach as did Dempster before him. Hamilton examines the structure of each book of the Bible in canonical order and relates them to the progressive

⁴⁰ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

revelation of the Big Story. He decides that the Big Story is that God seeks to display his glory throughout the earth and that He does so in judging sin and then saving sinners.⁴¹ The key for Hamilton is Exodus 34 soon after God has saved the Israelites by judging the nation of Egypt, in which God announces to Moses that he is a God of mercy and justice. All the promises and covenants that God makes have their ultimate end in glorifying God who saves through judgment.⁴² At 640 pages this book may be read only by scholars and seminarians.

God's Epic Adventure by Winn Griffin

This book is a very detailed workbook type resource.⁴³ Griffin uses Bishop Tom Wright's five-act-play model to present the Bible as a chronological storyline. The themes of Covenant in the Old Testament and the Kingdom of God in the New Testament are seen as two ways of saying the same thing, namely that God has invaded this present evil age with his rule. Griffin hopes that if believers read the scriptures as One Story, they may learn to live in that Story rather than merely applying fragmented parts of it to their lives. Every book of the Bible is given an overview and its historical context is described.

Griffin's outline of the Bible covers the Old Testament in three acts:⁴⁴

Act I Creation

Act II The Fall and Separation

⁴¹ Stephen Dempster, review of *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, by James M. Hamilton Jr., <http://www.9marks.org/books/book-review-gods-glory-salvation-through-judgment> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

⁴² Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 63, 132-133.

⁴³ Winn Griffin, *God's Epic Adventure* (Woodinville, WA: Harmon Press, 2007).

⁴⁴ Griffin, *God's Epic Adventure*, 60-61.

Act III is rest of the Old Testament and is divided into 10 scenes:

- Patriarchal stage
- The Exodus
- Covenant stage: the giving of the Law: Exodus 19—Numbers
- Journey to the Promised Land
- Conquest stage
- Judges stage
- United Kingdom stage
- Divided Kingdom stage
- Exile stage
- Restoration stage

The Epic of Eden by Sandra Richter

Richter compares the average Christian's comprehension of the Old Testament to a cluttered closet that desperately needs to have the disheveled mess of names, places and stories organized in a way so that they can be productively used. *The Epic of Eden*⁴⁵ attempts to provide a means of mentally organizing our understanding of the Old Testament. As she says, "My goal in this book is to provide structure. Metaphorically speaking, to pick the clothes up off the floor, get some hangers, a pole and some hooks, and help you build a closet of your very own. You already have many (possibly most) of the facts you need: I'm going to give you a place to hang them."⁴⁶

Richter starts off with a discussion of the patriarchal family customs of ancient Israel since it explains so much of why Old Testament characters from Abraham to Ruth think and act the way they do. She is not judgmental in this section but merely explanatory. Chapter two gives a helpful overview of the history and geography of the Old Testament story, what Richter calls the "real time and space" in which the Old

⁴⁵ Richter, Sandra, *The Epic of Eden* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008).

⁴⁶ Richter, *The Epic of Eden*, 19.

Testament took place. She next explains the concepts of covenant and redemption. Then with those concepts in hand she tackles the storyline of the Old Testament.

She breaks the Old Testament down into five main portions based on five main characters: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. If you can understand these five men and why they are important, Richter claims, you can have a good grasp of how the Old Testament works.⁴⁷ She chose these five because each of them is associated with a covenant that God initiated and that Jesus Christ fulfills which brings all of God's original purposes in Eden to fruition.

Richter's book is very informative. She discusses various views of Genesis 1. She compares Biblical covenants to ancient covenants and treaties and she explains why Abraham cut the animals in half in Genesis 15 and much more. These discussions threaten to derail her narrative but she is able to explain why these discussions are important to the overall Picture of the Old Testament. These discussions are great for background information but in a 90 minute seminar, such as mine, much of it must end up on the cutting room floor.

Having just noted that in some ways she has too much information, one must also note that in an important way Richter has too little. The culprit is her outline. In following her choice of five key Old Testament characters, her retelling of the Old Testament comes to a brief and abrupt summation after the life of David. To put it in another way, after telling the story from Genesis to David in 210 pages, she wraps up the rest of the Old Testament from Solomon to Malachi in eight pages. Thus, Richter has provided

⁴⁷ Richter, *The Epic of Eden*, 47-55. She limits her discussion of geography to Israel, Egypt and Mesopotamia. See p. 55-68.

interesting background material but sacrificed the last third of the Old Testament storyline.

The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem
by Willem A. Vangemeren

Vangemeren traces the progressive development of Gods' plan of redemption over the course of the scriptures.⁴⁸ One of its strengths is its detail and its respect for the diversity of literary genres even though seeing the unity of the plan they witness to. Although Vangemeren too often goes off on other topics such as the early church fathers, non-Christian philosophers, church age and the inter-Testamental period, book is full of sound exegesis. One may particularly admire and employ his summation of the message of the prophets.⁴⁹ At 460 pages of text, this book does not immediately lend itself to a handy overview of the Old Testament.

He sees the plan of redemption as having twelve epochs. The eight epochs in the Old Testament are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Creation in Harmony | Genesis 1-2 |
| 2. Creation in Alienation | Genesis 3-11 |
| 3. Election and Promise | Genesis 12-50 |
| 4. A Holy Nation | Exodus - Joshua |
| 5. A Nation like the Other Nations | Judges 1 - 1 Samuel 15 |
| 6. A Royal Nation | 1 Samuel 16 - 1 Kings 11;
1 Chronicles - 2 Chronicles 9 |
| 7. A Divided Nation | 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 25;
2 Chronicles 10-36 |
| 8. A Restored Nation | Ezra, Nehemiah, the Prophets |

⁴⁸ Vangemeren, Willem, *The Progress of Redemption* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1995).

⁴⁹ Vangemeren, 268-279.

Donald Carson's recent book is a survey of fourteen attributes of God that he examines in canonical order.⁵⁰ The reader sees God progressively disclosing His nature and His program in salvation. Six chapters center on the Old Testament. They are:

- The God Who Made Everything (Gen 1 and Creation)
- The God Who Does Not Wipe Out Rebels (Gen 3 and the Fall)
- The God Who Writes His Own Agreements (Gen 12 and God's covenant with Abraham)
- The God Who Legislates (The 10 Commandments)
- The God Who Reigns (2 Sam 7 and David)
- The God Who Is Unfathomably Wise (Wisdom Literature)

Carson then briefly surveys the prophetic books and the remaining eight chapters examine key New Testament concepts. Carson does not address the Flood (even though chapter two's title would seem to beg mention of a time when God wiped the rebels off the face of the earth) or the Exodus and Passover. He skips over Joshua, Judges, and nearly everything after David. He covers his topics eloquently and avoids theological terms that expressed simply with non-believers who have never read the Bible before in mind.

Carson's book supplies a rough outline of the scriptures but it is more a portrayal of the God of the Bible than it is an overview of the Bible. As usual D. A. Carson's book is well worth reading for his exegesis of the scriptures. Donald Carson taught this material over two weekends at a church in Minnesota. They have generously made those talks available online.⁵¹

⁵⁰ D. A. Carson, *The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place In God's Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010).

⁵¹ D. A. Carson, *The God Who Is There*, mp3 version at http://www.monergism.com/mp3/2010/07/d_a_carsons_the_god_who_is_the_1.php (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

There are now some excellent resources for helping children to understand the Big Picture of the Bible. These three are currently the best ones. They have enough thought-provoking theological substance to them that they can instruct adults as well.

The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name by Sally Lloyd-Jones

*The Jesus Storybook Bible*⁵² retells individual stories from the Bible. Twenty-one stories are from the Old Testament and every story in her book foreshadows the coming of Jesus to rescue his people. Ms. Lloyd-Jones is true to the subtitle of her book: every Bible story "whispers his name." Jesus is seen as the finishing puzzle piece in every Old Testament story picture puzzle. Seemingly taking her cue from the walk to Emmaus in Luke 24, she sees the whole Old Testament to be about Jesus.

Sometimes the stories reveal Christ directly. At other times, the stories reveal humanity's need for Christ to be what the characters in the Old Testament stories were not. And the thing that this book stresses above everything else is that Jesus Christ has done for us what we can never do for ourselves. Consequently, her retelling of Bible stories is not moralistic as many children's Bible storybooks often tend to be. Neither does she hold up Old Testament characters as shining examples of faith.

In an interview, Lloyd-Jones said, "I found it so moving when I started to discover how the Old Testament is basically one long record of failure—the failure of God's people time and time again to live rightly, to rescue themselves—and that the stories in the Old Testament are all getting us ready for the One who is coming. They are

⁵² Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: ZonderKidz, 2007).

all signposts to the True Hero, the True King, the True Prince, the True Servant, the greater David, the greater Daniel, and the Rescuer.”⁵³

Ms. Lloyd-Jones attends Redeemer Presbyterian in New York, NY. Her pastor is Dr. Tim Keller. She claims that his preaching was the inspiration to write her book. Keller’s “teaching is always all about Jesus. He opened my eyes to seeing Jesus in all the scriptures. There’s always a point in every sermon he preaches, where everything looks to Jesus. It’s the turning point of the sermon. It’s the point where Grace comes in.”⁵⁴

Eventually she decided to write a children’s book that does what Tim Keller’s sermons do. Ms. Lloyd-Jones took a seminary class that surveyed the entire Bible on twenty-five cassettes and then did serious Bible study as she wrote each chapter.

“For each story I identified what character trait of Jesus to draw out from that story,” she says, “I thought about each story as building a portrait of Jesus. Then I told the story with that trait central in my mind so that the entire story turns on it.”⁵⁵

Lloyd-Jones understands the Old Testament in the same terms as many evangelical adults do: that of prophecy and the foreshadowing of Christ’s coming. But Lloyd-Jones has expressed that idea in concrete language that children can understand. Those interested in teaching the Big Picture of the Bible may find that the way *The Jesus Storybook* explains the Bible to children works well with adults too because it simply lays out the plot line of redemption and points to the one who was to come to rescue us in

⁵³ Sally Lloyd-Jones, interview by Dan Cruver, The Eucatastrophe Blog, entry posted March 12, 2007, <http://www.eucatastrophe.com/blog/archives/2007/03/12/interview-with-sally-lloyd-jones-author-of-the-jesus-storybook-bible/> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

⁵⁴ Sally Lloyd-Jones, interview by Dan Cruver, The Eucatastrophe Blog, entry posted March 12, 2007, <http://www.eucatastrophe.com/blog/archives/2007/03/12/interview-with-sally-lloyd-jones-author-of-the-jesus-storybook-bible/> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

⁵⁵ Sally Lloyd-Jones, interview by Dan Cruver, The Eucatastrophe Blog, entry posted March 12, 2007, <http://www.eucatastrophe.com/blog/archives/2007/03/12/interview-with-sally-lloyd-jones-author-of-the-jesus-storybook-bible/> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

every story. Dr. Keller has urged fellow preachers to read this book in order to “improve their preaching.”⁵⁶

The Big Picture Story Bible by David R. Helm

On the other hand, “The Big Picture Story Bible” does just what the title indicates.⁵⁷ I think of it as the children’s version of Graeme Goldsworthy’s book. It does not explicitly point to Christ in each individual story. Rather, it guides a child through the various stages of redemptive history (Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation) and shows how God orchestrated it all. Just as the title claims, it is an overview of the Bible for kids. It covers the Old Testament in eleven stories and ends with the temple being rebuilt as does the Hebrew Bible.

What God Has Always Wanted: The Bible's Big Idea from Genesis through Revelation
by Charles F. Boyd

Boyd, a Baptist minister, felt that parents were not being equipped to teach the gospel to their young children in a “simple, biblically-accurate” way. So he wrote a picture book that parents can read to their children (thereby teaching both parents and children.)⁵⁸

His book simply and clearly explains the Bible’s story by means of five questions being answered from the scriptures:

⁵⁶ Bob Hayton, review of *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones, Feb 23, 2007, <http://www.fundamentallyreformed.com/2007/02/23/the-storybook-for-preachers/> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

⁵⁷ David R. Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004).

⁵⁸ Charles F. Boyd, *What God Has Always Wanted: The Bible's Big Idea from Genesis to Revelation* (Little Rock, AR: Family Life, 2006).

What does God want?
What went wrong?
Why is the world the way it is?
What is God doing to make things right again?
How will it all end?⁵⁹

Answering these questions led Boyd to lay out the storyline of the Bible in a simple and direct way.

Other helpful resources not reviewed here include:

1. *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* by Max E. Anders
2. *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours* by Chuck Missler
3. *The Story of God: Understanding the Bible from Beginning to End* by Tommy Nelson
4. *The Bible Overview* by Matthias Media
5. *Telling God's Story (The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End)* by Preben Vang and Terry Carter
6. *True Story* by James Choung. The author has a basic gospel presentation based on his book on YouTube.
7. *Discovering God's Story: Fully Illustrated Bible Handbook in Chronological Order* by Standard Publishing. This book came about because salesmen for Standard publishing noticed that many adults were buying children's Bibles in order to understand the overall story of the Bible. This book is an attempt to render a kid's book for grown-ups⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Boyd, *What God Has Always Wanted*, 23.

⁶⁰ Jim Eichenberger, interview by Brad Dupray, for *Christian Standard*, transcript posted on Jan. 9, 2011, <http://christianstandard.com/2011/01/interview-with-jim-eichenberger> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

And just for fun, I am including two other resources. The first of these is called ‘The Bible in 50 Words’ by Anglicans Online:⁶¹

God made, Adam bit, Noah arked, Abraham split,
Joseph ruled, Jacob fooled, bush talked, Moses balked,
Pharaoh plagued, people walked, sea divided, tablets guided,
Promise landed, Saul freaked, David peeked,
Prophets warned, Jesus born, God walked, love talked,
Anger crucified, hope died, Love rose,
Spirit flamed, Word spread, God remained.

The second fun resource is “Bible in a Minute,” a summation of the whole Bible in 60 seconds, written and performed by the internet comedy team, Barats and Berata:⁶²

Earth Made, Adam, Eve,
Cain Kills Abel, Has To Leave
Boring Genealogies, Great Flood, Olive Leaf
Tower of Babel, Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah and
Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses,
Ten Commands, Promised Land,
Judges, David, Solomon,
Sent Away To Babylon
Job, Then a Bunch of Psalms
Proverbs and The Song of Songs
Major Prophets, Lion’s Den
Minor Prophets, Bethlehem
Gold and Myrrh and Frankincense
Satan and Samaritan
Choose Disciples, Other Cheek
Walk on Water, Thousands Eat
Lazarus, Fig Tree
Last Supper, Gethsemane
Blood Money, Third Denial
Pontius Pilate, Public Trial
Forty Lashes, To The Tree
“Why Have You Forsaken Me?”
Third Day, Empty Tomb
Reappears, Five Wounds

⁶¹ Anglicans Online, “The Bible in 50 Words,” <http://www.anglicansonline.org/special/50.html> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

⁶² Barats and Berata, “Bible in a Minute,” Youtube Web site, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar_k8JjVWQA (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

Acts Of The Apostles, Next
Epistles And Apocalypse

I have included an appendix at the end of this thesis describing some of the techniques used in the Walk Thru The Bible's five hour Old Testament overview seminar and how I adapted those techniques for my seminar.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

This chapter contains the project as it was actually employed at the annual Wee Kirk Conference¹ in Montreat, NC on October 19-20, 2010. This project was taught as a seminar entitled “Knowing the Old Testament Like the Back of Your Hand.” It was taught in three times in two days--the same content to three different groups of pastors, lay preachers, elders and their spouses—with a combined attendance of 80-90 people.

Due to the mandatory margins of a thesis-project, the handouts found here do not look exactly as they did in the actual seminar.

Helps included hand motions, a map of the Old Testament area, and an outline with blank spaces or missing words to be filled in by the participant during the course of the seminar.

This chapter contains:

- A statement of my “Intended Educational Outcomes”
- A copy of the handout that I gave to the participants of my seminar which includes: the Old Testament quiz given before and after the seminar, the map I used for a summary of Old Testament events, the outline that I gave to the participants and two Old Testament case studies that help participants to apply the Big Picture to individual Old Testament stories.
- A description of the Hand Motions used in the seminar

¹ Wee Kirk is a 30 year old conference for Presbyterian pastors and elders who serve congregations with fewer than 125-150 members.

- A copy of the teacher's outline
- The content of the seminar—the material I taught in 90 minutes

In determining what I wanted my listeners to learn and how they would show me whether or not they had learned it, I developed the following statement of Intended Educational Outcomes:

With the helps that I have given: Hand Motions, map, and a lecture outline in the handout, participants will be able to:

1. Comprehend a basic outline of the Old Testament: Know the eight chunks of the Old Testament and the theme of each chunk (from the “Old Testament at 10,000 Feet”) by being able to write them down right after the seminar concludes.
2. Comprehend a basic outline of the key events and personages in the story of the Old Testament: Given three lists of five Bible events or characters, participants will attempt to put each list in Biblical order so that 50% of the participants are correct in their placement of at least 9 of the 15 events or characters. (This is in recognition that with matching questions, if a person gets one out of order, they often have two incorrect answers.) It is hoped that 25% of participants will get at least 12 of 15 (80%) correct.
3. Given three lists of five Bible events or characters, participants will attempt to put them in Biblical order both immediately before I begin to teach and then immediately after I teach, it is hoped that 25-50% of participants will demonstrate improvement even if the final score is below the 80% goal in statement 2 (above). Goal 2 deals with proficiency but goal 3 aims for improvement.

4. Recognize that in the Big Picture, one story unites the stories of the Old Testament: Given an Old Testament Bible story, Genesis 38 and/or 2 Kings 11, participants will try to demonstrate to someone else in the workshop how the particular story relates to Big Picture of the Bible. Participants will discuss this with one or two other participants for a few minutes and then some will communicate their thoughts to the whole workshop.

The following several pages reproduces the handout that I gave to my participants of my Old Testament seminar. The first thing I did in every seminar was to test my participants pre-understanding of the Big Picture of the Old Testament with a short quiz. (The last thing I did in every seminar was to have them retake the same quiz in order to measure how much they had learned.) This is how I started.

“Please listen to my instructions before you start this quiz. This quiz should be anonymous. Do you best and remember that it only reflects on me as your instructor. This quiz will be a great help to me completing the Doctor of Ministry degree.

With the big map as a help, write down the eight parts of the Old Testament in the order we discussed today. The main thing is not that you use my terminology but that you have the essential rough outline.”

This is the quiz the participants took before and after the seminar:

1. Place these events in their correct Biblical order (numbering 1-5)

- _____ The giving of the law at Mt. Sinai
- _____ David becomes king
- _____ The Fall
- _____ The Exodus led by Moses
- _____ The Flood of Noah

SUMMARY OF OLD TESTAMENT EVENTS



**GEOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY
OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT**

I included an outline with blank spaces for participants to fill in as they listened. It looked like this:

Outline for “KNOWING THE OLD TESTAMENT”

Wee Kirk 2010, Rev. Donald Plumstead Marshall

1. **Creation & Rebellion** --- Genesis 1-11

Creation – _____

Fall – _____

Flood – _____

Flop – _____

See Genesis 1:1, 3:15

2. **First Promise** --- Genesis 12-50: The Beginning of the G_____ according to Gal 3:6-8

- Early Receivers of the Promise
 - Abraham first receives the Promise that leads to our redemption *2000 BC*
 - Isaac receives the Promise
 - Jacob the receives the Promise (even if Jacob is a rascal)
 - **12** Sons whose families become 12 Clans or Tribes

Remember: _____ : Joseph, Judah + 10

See Genesis 12, 15, 49:10

3. **Exodus** --- The LORD Redeems His People

– God calls Moses *1500 BC*

- 10 Plagues = _____
- Cross the _____ to _____
- 10 Commandments in Sinai
- Rebellion in the Wilderness and 40 years of Wandering

See Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 18

4. Conquest/Conquered

- Joshua
 - Cross the Jordan River
 - Jericho & Rahab
 - Conquers Canaan--The Land becomes God's _____, the place the _____ will come to
 - Joshua commands the next generation to _____
- Judges
 - The next generation fails to _____
 - A Spiritual Downward Spiral
 - God sends j_____ (Military Leaders) such as Gideon, Samson & Deborah
 - Meanwhile,God's plan continues: _____ & _____
 - A Closing Refrain: "We need a K_____"

See Joshua 1, 24; Judges 21; Ruth 4

5. The Kingdom United

- S_____, a failed king
- D_____
- A ‘_____’-Able King (in two ways)
- Royal Line of M_____
- S_____
- Builds the first _____
- Divides the _____

1000 BC

See 2 Samuel 7; Psalms 16, 22, 110, et al.

6. The Kingdom Divided

- The North vs. the South: I_____ and J_____.
- Lots of Kings---Some Good, Some Bad
 - Israel – North-- ____ Kings: ____ good
 - Judah – South-- ____ Kings: ____ good
- Lots of Prophets---Some Do, Some Write
 - Prophets sent to Israel – Elijah & Elisha (and many others)
 - Prophets sent to Judah – Isaiah & Jeremiah (and many others)

See 1 Kings 18; Isaiah 7, 9, 53; Jeremiah 31

7. The Exile(s)

- Israel exiled to _____ Forever
- Judah exiled to _____ 70 years (and told ahead of time)

700 BC

600 BC

- God's People in Babylon, Persia

_____ and Esther are examples of faithful living in hostile surroundings

See Daniel 7

8. Return & Restoration

500 BC

- Ezra
- Nehemiah
 - Rebuild the _____
 - Rebuild the _____
- Malachi: "The Lord...Coming Soon to a temple near you, but first this announcer"
- Waiting for the Messiah

Zechariah 9:9; Malachi 3-4

When time permitted, I lead seminar groups in one of the following two case study exercises for small groups. The case studies are to be performed only after the lecture portion is completed and the hand motions have been sufficiently taught and rehearsed and if time permits.

I divided the participants into two halves. The first half was to read 2 Kings 11 in small groups of three or four and the other half was to do the same with Genesis 38. Then they were to decide together: "How does the Big Picture of the Bible help us understand the importance of this story?"

Case Study #1: 2 Kings 11: 1-12

When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that her son was dead, she seized the throne. She began to destroy the entire the royal family, the royal line of David.

But Jehosheba, the king's sister, took King Ahaziah's infant son, Joash, and hid him away from among the rest of the king's children, who were about to be killed. She put Joash and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah, so the child was not murdered. Joash remained hidden away for six years in the Temple of GOD. Athaliah, oblivious to his existence, ruled the country.

When the boy was seven years old, the high priest sent for the captains of the Royal Guards. They met him in The Temple of GOD. He made a covenant with them, swore them to secrecy, and only then showed them the young prince.

Then the priest brought the prince into view, crowned him, handed him the scroll of God's covenant, and made him king. As they anointed him, everyone applauded and shouted, "Long live the king!"

When Athaliah heard all the noise made by the palace guards and the people, she hurried to the LORD's Temple to see what was happening. When she arrived, she saw the newly crowned king standing in his place of authority. The commanders and trumpeters were surrounding him, and people from all over the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. When Athaliah saw all this, she tore her clothes in despair and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

Case Study #2: Genesis 38

Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. But Judah's firstborn, Er, grievously offended GOD and GOD took his life. So Judah told Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow; it's the duty of a brother-in-law to keep your brother's family line alive." But Onan knew that the child wouldn't be his, so he wouldn't produce a child so that his brother's line could continue. GOD was much offended by what he did and took Onan's life. So Judah stepped in and told his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow at home with your father until my son Shelah grows up." He was worried that Shelah would also end up dead, just like his brothers. Time passed. Sometime later, Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law has gone to Timnah to shear his sheep." She took off her widow's clothes, put on a veil to disguise herself, and sat at the entrance to Enaim which is on the road to Timnah. She realized by now that even though Shelah was grown up, she wasn't going to be married to him.

Judah saw her and assumed she was a prostitute since she had veiled her face. He left the road and went over to her. He said, "Let me sleep with you." He had no idea that she was his daughter-in-law.

She said, "What will you pay me?"

"I'll send you," he said, "a kid goat from the flock."

"But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?" she asked.

"What kind of guarantee do you want?" he replied.

She answered, "'Your personal seal and the staff you are carrying.'" So Judah gave them to her. Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow's clothing as usual.

About three months later, Judah was told, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she's pregnant."

"Bring her out, and let her be burned!" Judah demanded. But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and walking stick are these?"

Judah recognized them immediately and said, "She is more righteous than I am, because I didn't arrange for her to marry my remaining son Shelah." And Judah never slept with Tamar again. Tamar gave birth to twins that she named Perez and Zerah.

I will now explain the Hand Motions that I made up were used to help people remember a basic outline of the Old Testament. The following is a how-to guide to performing the Hand Motions that we used in the seminars.

"Creation" Fold the left forearm parallel to your chest and horizontal to the floor. It will act as the earth's horizon. Start with right hand below the left hand then slide it up as if it is a flower springing from the earth. Slowly open your hand like a flower blooming. Stop when the right elbow rests on top of the left hand. It should take between one and two seconds to do this motion.

"The Fall" Drop the "flower" over until your arms are crossed, right arm lying on top of the left arm.

“Suitcase in hand, Abraham looking for the Promised Land” Left hand picks up a suitcase by the handle, right hand placed just over the eyes as if looking at something far away.

“Egypt--Chains on” Left hand grabs right wrist, then right hand grabs left wrist like slapping on a pair of handcuffs or putting on shackles.

“Exodus--Chains Off” Throw your hands out towards the audience like a person casting off their prison shackles with fingers spread apart.

“Ten Commandments” Continue the motion from (b) until palms face the audience and say “10 Commandments” (they will comprehend that your ten fingers stand for Ten Commandments and a number of people usually chuckle). Try to do (b) and (c) in one smooth, continuous motion.

“Draw your sword. This land is ours” Draw out a sword from a scabbard. Then hold it up high.

*“Thanks for the robe **Judge**, but we need a **King**.”* First, make the motion of putting on a robe, one arm and then the other. Then, put your hands together to make a circle as you place them on your head as you would put on a crown.

“We get a king” Keep hands still on top of head like a crown.

“Crown broken” Break hands apart, each hand making a circle for the two crowns or kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

“Exile to Babylon, Temple gone, Chains again?!?” Hand cuff motion again

“70 years, chains off” Make the motion again for hand cuffs falling off but do not repeat the 10 commandments motion again. Go swiftly into next motion.

“Return. Rebuild the temple. Waiting for the Messiah.” Hammering motion for rebuilding by making a fist with the left hand and holding it still while the right hand, also in a fist, hammers the top of the left fist. Fold your arms for a moment, and then bring the right index finger up to your right jaw, left hand holding your right elbow while tapping one of your feet.

The outline that starts immediately below is the one I used in the seminar. All the blank spaces that the participants had to fill in are already filled in for the teacher. The letters **HM** indicate when the teacher should introduce the Hand Motion for that section as well as lead in all the Motions that the group has learned up to that point for the purpose of review.

KNOWING THE OLD TESTAMENT, Wee Kirk 2010,
Rev. Donald Plumstead Marshall

1. **Creation & Rebellion** --- Genesis 1-11

- Creation – Adam & Eve
- Fall – Adam, Eve & Serpent
- Flood – Noah & Ark
- Flop – Tower of Babylon

The First Hint of a Redeemer, Someone who will come to save us.

Genesis 1:1, 3:15

HM

2. **First Promise** --- Genesis 12-50: The Beginning of the Gospel according to Gal 3:6-8.

- Early Receivers of the Promise
 - Abraham first receives the Promise that leads to our redemption *2000 BC*
 - Isaac receives promise
 - Jacob receives promise even if he is a rascal
 - 12 Sons whose families become 12 Clans or Tribes

Remember, Folks: A – I – J – 12: Joseph and Judah + 10

Genesis 12; 15; 49:10

HM

3. **Exodus** --- The LORD Redeems His People

- God calls Moses *1500 BC*
- 10 Plagues = 9 + Passover Lamb + 1
- Cross Red Sea to Sinai
- 10 Commandments in Sinai
- Rebellion in the Wilderness and 40 years of Wandering

Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 18

HM

4. **Conquest/Conquered**

- Joshua
 - Cross the Jordan River
 - Jericho & Rahab
 - Conquers Canaan: The Land becomes the base of operations, the place to which the Hero will come.

- Joshua commands the next generation to _____.
- Judges
 - The next generation fails to Occupy Canaan
 - A Spiritual Downward Spiral
 - God sends Judges (Military Leaders) such as Gideon, Samson & Deborah
 - Meanwhile,God's plan continues: _____ & _____
 - A Closing Refrain: "We need the KING"

Joshua 1, 24; Judges 21; Ruth 4

HM

5. The Kingdom United

- Saul, a failed king
- DAVID *1000 BC*
 - A 'Prophet - Able' King (in two ways, David is an able king & a prophet)
 - Royal Line of Messiah
- Solomon
- Builds the first Temple
- Divides the Nation

2 Samuel 7; Psalms 16, 22, 110, et al.

HM

6. The Kingdom Divided

- The North vs. the South: Israel and Judah
- Lots of Kings---Some Good, Some Bad
 - Israel – North--19 Kings: the Score: 0 good

- Judah – South--19 Kings: the Score: eight good
- Lots of Prophets---Some Do, Some Write
 - Prophets sent to Israel – Elijah & Elisha (and many others)
 - Prophets sent to Judah – Isaiah & Jeremiah (and many others)

1 Kings 18; Isaiah 7, 9, 53; Jeremiah 31

HM

7. The Exile(s)

- Israel exiled to Assyria forever *700 BC*
- Judah exiled to Babylon for 70 years (Judah told ahead of time) *600 BC*
- God's People in Babylon, Persia

Daniel and Esther are examples of faithful living in hostile surroundings

Daniel 7

HM

8. Return & Restoration

500 BC

- Ezra
- Nehemiah
 - Rebuild the Temple
 - Rebuild the People
- Malachi “The Lord...Coming Soon to a temple near you but first this announcer”
- Waiting for the Messiah

Zechariah 9:9; Malachi 3-4

HM

HM=Show people the Hand Motion for that section and review all previous ones on every even numbered point.

The following is a transcript of the actual Big Picture of the Old Testament Seminar that I taught at the Wee Kirk and Christian Life conferences.

When people ask us, “Where did you go on your vacation?” They want, “We went to the beach.” They do not want a day by day account.

They ask, “Did you hear the President’s speech last night?”

“Yes.”

“What was it on?”

“The economy.”

“What did he say?”

“He’s for jobs.”

They want something like that. No one wants you to say, “First, he said ‘My fellow Americans and then....’” They want a short but helpful summation. That is what we will attempt to do with the Old Testament. We are going to give an overview of the story of the Old Testament. We are looking at the Big Picture of the Old Testament. We are not examining every story and character.

I am going to run through the story of the Old Testament twice. I call them the Old Testament at 30,000 feet and the Old Testament at 10,000 feet. First, in the 30,000 foot view, I will give you a very brief overview of the plot of the Old Testament. I will do so by means of this map up here on the easel. You have a small version of it in your notes. I think it helps to think where each of the eight scenes or chunks takes place. The places are the settings for each major scene.

Then we will start over and go in more depth and look at the Old Testament at 10,000 feet.

(I introduce the map.)

Here are the landmarks—Mediterranean Sea, Canaan, Egypt, Red Sea, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers: Assyria and Babylon. Way out here is Persia. Most of the Old Testament takes place here in Canaan. Here is the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. Jerusalem is west and north of the Dead Sea.

The Old Testament At 30,000 Feet

Scene 1 Creation & Rebellion

I think it helps to think where each of the eight scenes takes place. Like scenes in a movie or play. Eden was about here, with the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as boundaries on one side. We don't know what the other landmarks given mean. In the land between the Tigris and Euphrates is possibly where Noah lived. It is where the Tower of Babylon was built. These locations are approximate. Not until scene 2 can we be very certain.

Scene 2 First Promise

Scene 2 starts here near the Persian Gulf. This is where Abraham originally was from God calls Abraham to move to Canaan (here). God promises to give Abraham a son, a family and then a nation and a land for them to live on and God promises to use

Abraham's people to reach the world for Him. After Abraham, come Isaac and then Jacob: A- I- J. Jacob has 12 sons and these sons will have families and the 12 families over time will become the 12 tribes or clans of Israel.

Then Jacob's son, Joseph, is sold into Egyptian slavery but God engineers it so that Joseph is a powerful assistant to the Pharaoh. Soon the rest of Jacob's family comes to join Joseph in Egypt. Scene 2 ends in Egypt with the people of God welcomed as guests of the Egyptian king.

Scene 3 Exodus

Many, many years pass and Jacob and his sons pass away and the Hebrews who were once the invited guests of one king, many years later, become the slaves of a much later king. God calls Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses and the people miraculously pass through the waters of the Red Sea and then march south across the Sinai Peninsula. God gives them the 10 Commandments and the system of laws and commandments that we associate with the Old Testament.

They are not able to enter the land because of disobedience and then wander for 40 years in the desert. Moses dies and Joshua becomes the new leader. End of Scene 3.

Scene 4 Conquest/Conquered

Scene 4 takes place in Canaan (here on the map). Joshua and the people cross the Jordan River and they begin to conquer the land starting with Jericho (here on the map).

Joshua takes the land God promised Abraham. The land of Canaan finally becomes Israel's land for the first time under Joshua. Most of the rest of the Bible takes place here.

After Joshua, comes the period of the judges in which the people fail to follow up Joshua's victories or obedience to God and this lasts for 200 years.

Scene 5 The Kingdom United

And then they get a king who unites the 12 tribes of Israel into one kingdom. This is the time of King David and then his son, Solomon. This is a golden age in many ways. David brings the people peace from their enemies. After, David, the temple is built in Jerusalem (here) under Solomon's leadership. However, because Solomon also disobeys God, the kingdom splits into two nations shortly after the death of Solomon.

Scene 6 The Kingdom Divided

Scene 6 begins with this split and is the story of the two kingdoms. It still takes place in the Bible lands. The kingdom is split into two parts, a northern kingdom and a southern one. The south is called Judah after the tribe of kings and since most of the 12 tribes break away, the north calls itself Israel.

God begins to send lots of prophets because the people fall away from him again. The prophets call the people to repent and warn them of coming judgment. After 200

years, Israel, the northern kingdom, is taken away out to here on the map by the Assyrian army. They never come back again.

In another 150 years, Judah is taken away to Babylon (out here). God allowed the Babylonians to take Judah away into exile. However, before that dreadful event happened, He promised to bring Judah back to the land 70 years after their removal.

Scene 7 The Exile(s)

Judah has been taken off the land and for 70 years they live scattered around the Babylonian empire. They are to learn to obey God and worship only Him. Daniel and then Esther live at that time and are faithful to God. Babylon's empire falls to the Persians and it is the kings of Persia that allow God's people to return to their land.

Scene 8 Return & Restoration

Then in scene 8, they return and rebuild the land. They rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord. And the Old Testament ends with the people back on the land waiting for the Messiah.

Now let's examine the Old Testament more closely.

The Old Testament At 10,000 Feet

I see the Old Testament in eight big chunks. I would call them chapters but that might be confusing because the Bible is divided up into chapters. You can call them eras or acts (like in a play) or chunks. Let's call them scenes. There are eight acts or big chunks of the story, eight major scene changes.

Scene 1 Creation and Rebellion

God creates Adam and Eve and is in communion with them. God always wanted a people that would be His people. He wanted a people who would love Him and adore Him and enjoy Him forever. He would be pleased to say, "These are my people and I will live with them." He wants people that He can live with and people who will say that "He is our God."

God always intended to have a people that would be his. This is His ultimate desired outcome: a people that would live for and with him forever. A people that a holy God can live with. Eternal fellowship in which they would be his people and he would protect and provide for and love them. They would honor and worship and trust, love him and obey him and enjoy him for ever. Consequently, they would live in loving fellowship with each other too.

Normally a movie starts off like this: In the first 20 minutes or so the setting is established, then there has to be some kind of a crisis (guy meets girl; guy loses girl; guy gets girl back again). In the Creation Story -- the fall is the crisis. It appears to the first

time reader that everything that God wanted is just ruined by the creatures that He made. He made a good world and the good world went bad. Adam and Eve blame God, they blame each other, they separate from God and they have to be somewhat alienated from each other.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis can be summed up as the 'C and the Three F's. In Genesis 1-2, God makes a good world. In Genesis 3-11, the good world goes bad. First *Creation*, then Adam and Eve sin against God -- the *Fall*, then comes the *Flood* and the *Flop* -- the collapse of the Tower of Babel. The Fall drives the story and God is going to overcome this as humanity falls away from Him in sin and disobedience.

Genesis 3-11 shows not only the sin against God but the effects of sin. When we break our relationship with God we start to break apart the relationships we have with each other. The first person ever born murders the second person ever born. The rest is everyday newspaper stuff. We just keep repeating the same story. Nothing much has changed. The effects of sin are seen in the lives of God's people, in fact, it's seen in everything from the length of people's lives, to their relationships, to society to nations and even to its effects on nature.

God enacts judgment on sin in these chapters: Noah and the Ark. God wipes out all of humanity except for Noah and his family and there is a starting over. We begin to see the pattern that God hates sin and there is going to be a judgment. The covenant with Noah is the first covenant in the Bible. That covenant is not going to save us; it is just a covenant that God will not destroy the earth again by flooding. We just continually keep rebelling in Scene 1. There is a ray of hope in Genesis 1-11.

Fortunately for us, in Genesis 3:15, God gives the first hint of his plan of redemption. God gives the first hint in how he is going to save us and fulfill his intentions that seemingly are wrecked by sin and rebellion against Him.

God makes a promise that there is going to be someone born of Eve, does not say Adam and Eve just Eve. This person born of the woman will fight the serpent and his heel will be bitten but he will crush the serpent's head. He will be wounded but he is taking Satan out. In doing so, he will rescue what we lost. God wants a holy people to be His people forever but now we are sinners. Adam and Eve were the first but now we are all sinners too. God has to take the initiative in redemption. God has to do the heavy lifting. He is the hero of the Bible. He has to come through. He is going to get it done. He has to come through at the start and time and time again all the way through the Bible's story in order for us to be among the people that He has wanted to live with forever. Genesis 3:15 is the first hint that a redeemer is coming.

Now let me show you the first Hand Motion.

Scene 2 The First Promise

In scene 2, God sets his Plan in motion. God's plan begins with one person, Abraham. Galatians 3: 6-8, Paul states that the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached before Christ came when God made a promise to Abraham: through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Paul says that is the beginning of the gospel. The story of redemption really gets going when God calls Abraham and promises to do certain things for Abraham. God promises to give Abraham and Sarah a son. From that son will come

descendants that you will not be able to count there will be so many, like the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore. From those descendants will come a family and from that family, a nation. There is also a promise of land. This nation from Abraham is going to have a place to live. God is going to bless them and through Abraham, God is going to bless the world. God is going to reach the world. The gospel of Christ was placed in motion when God said to Abraham, "Through you, all the nations of the world will be blessed."

It was God's plan to send a redeemer but there has to be a place where the redeemer comes from and a people prepared to raise him and join him and accept his call to reach others for him. God starts with one person Abraham and his wife. They have a miraculous child. This is all God's doing. Then He builds a family, then a nation with a place to live. He will give them a book that shows their need and begins to reveal the plan. It contains the agenda of God Almighty and it shows them the remedy is coming. And that the remedy is a person and it describes him. It is true that Jesus is the only religious figure in history whose coming was predicted ahead of time and in such great specificity that people should recognize him when he comes unless we are so cold-hearted and closed to God that we just won't accept him no matter what he is like. Jesus was predicted so that when he came he would fit the description and fit it so well that it just has to be him and no one else.

There are going to be prophecies and predictions. These will sort of be like our nine digit zip codes. There is only one house in America that each nine digit zip code fits. Mine is 29649-3212. It is my house and not anyone else's. There is only one house in America that each nine digit zip code fits. The person who is coming, the redeemer, is

going to fit all these prophecies so that only one person can fulfill them all. One and only one. And, Jesus Christ, so someone once said is the only religious figure in all of history who had prophecies about Him before He came. If you think of all the other religions, all the other figures that head up cults, you will not find any other, other than Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whose coming was foretold. He was described not just hundreds but thousands of years before He was born.

The rest of Genesis revolves around Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Interestingly, they know that the person who is coming one day to redeem the world is coming through their family line. Isaac and Jacob were promised the same thing as Abraham. Jacob has twelve sons. The twelve sons will become twelve families and the twelve families will become twelve tribes or clans. Some of Jacobs's older sons get jealous of his younger son, Joseph, they end up leaving him in a deserted place to die and he is found and sold into slavery. God, working through Joseph, places him eventually in a position of being the right hand man of Pharaoh. He attains this position by interpreting the dreams of the King. The king is having dreams that are from God; dreams that are warnings of the famine so that the people can be saved by saving up food during the good years for when the bad years come. And the Pharaoh says, well, since God works through you I nominate you to run the national food bank.

During the famine that takes over the land Joseph's family comes to him for food, not knowing that it is him. He reveals himself to his family and he tells his brothers to bring his father and all their families to Egypt and they will be taken care of. That is how the book of Genesis ends. It's interesting that the book of Genesis ends with Joseph being laid in a casket in Egypt.

Our chart of the Patriarchs looks like this:

A—I—J^{Judah}_{Joseph} + 10 sons

I put Judah's name above Joseph's because for our purposes today Judah is more important. He is not much in the story and he is one of the brothers, who sold Joseph, but later near the end of Genesis, Jacob is pronouncing blessings on all of his sons (Gen 49) and when Jacob blesses Judah, Jacob announces that someday there will be kings of Israel and a royal line of kings. The true King of Israel will have to come from the line of Judah, not the other eleven tribes but only Judah.

The blessing that Jacob pronounces over Judah reads: "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his."

The royal line is to come from Judah. Kings are to reign over Israel from the tribe of Judah until **HE** comes. There are going to be a lot of kings with a small letter k and there is to be a king with a capital K. The throne really belongs to just one individual but until he comes there will be others are just keeping the throne warm. They serve as temporary, interim kings. However, when HE, The KING comes, He will reign forever. He is the eternal King, and the whole world belongs to Him. The King of the Jews is to be the King over the whole world.

So again:

A—I—J^{Judah}_{Joseph} + 10 sons

Scene 3 The Exodus

The family stays for years and years in Egypt and they get bigger and bigger in numbers and they end up being turned into slaves. God works through Moses who is sent to lead his people out of Egypt. God strikes Egypt with the ten plagues until the Pharaoh finally lets the Hebrew people go. Let us think of the ten plagues as nine plus the Passover lamb plus the last plague.

The first nine plagues strike at the religion and economy of Egypt. The land is devastated but stubborn Pharaoh won't give in to the God of mere slaves. Just before the tenth and last plague, God tells His people to take a lamb, then kill it, cook and eat it all up. They are to paint the top and sides of their front doors with the blood of the lamb that they drained off after killing it. They are to eat all of it and not leave any leftovers. They are also to pack their belongings and eat their lamb dinner with their traveling clothes and shoes on because they are leaving Egypt on the following morning.

In every house that did not do this, the first born male died. In every house that did do all this, the firstborn male was spared. The reason for the lamb's death and blood applied to the front doors is so that the first born son may go free. God is already planting the idea of Jesus, as the innocent substitute, sacrificed on the cross for our lives. God uses this throughout the Old Testament of the innocent sacrifice. We get the word 'scapegoat' from His sending the innocent goat out into the wilderness. Whenever a sinner goes free an innocent substitute must take your place. God makes this an integral part of their worship.

Then God sends the tenth plague, the first born of Egypt dies. Pharaoh says he's had enough and lets God's people leave Egypt. Exodus 12:13 says that not only do the Hebrews leave but a mixed multitude of others also leave with them, can you imagine some of the Egyptians saying, "I'm with you guys. We're tired of worshipping these phony gods who cannot save; you're the ones who have the real God." They cross the Red Sea. God opens up the water and they pass through the sea while walking on dry ocean bed. Pharaoh sends his chariots to recapture the Hebrews but God closes the red Sea on them and Pharaoh's army drowns.

Moses and the people cross the Sinai Peninsula. But first they spend some time alone with God in Sinai. God gives them the Ten Commandments and later some other laws. In the commandments, God is saying to them, "Now that I've save you, you are doubly my people. I am your Redeemer and you are my people. Here's how we're going to get along together. Here's what I want you to do. Here's how you are to regard me. Here's how you are to speak of me, here's how you worship me. Here is how you are to regard and treat each other as members of my people. Here, as well, is what you can depend on Me to do for you."

Notice that I said "Here's how you're going to treat each other?" All throughout the Bible, Old Testament or New Testament, God never separates the way we are suppose to treat each other from the way we are suppose to treat Him. This is something that was to distinguish them from all the other religions of the ancient world. It is also to distinguish us, as Christians, from the people of the world. God tells us that the way we treat other people, who were created in my image, is a reflection of our love for Him.

“You have to love your neighbor as yourself if you are also going to love me with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.”

They spend 40 years in the Sinai when they could have completed their journey in only months. The people rebel and they want to go back to Egypt so God says, “Okay, we’ll spend a few years here in the desert and then you can come in to the land I have promised.” Moses dies and God chooses Joshua to be the new leader. Finally, they reach the Promised Land, crossing the river and entering it with Joshua.

Scene 4 Conquest/Conquered

Joshua leads the people through the Jordan River. By God’s power they destroy the fortress city of Jericho and begin to take the land. Joshua wins quite a few battles. He occupies the land. He does a great job in his lifetime. But he only has one lifetime to lead his people. After doing all he could do in taking the land, he leaves the follow-up and mopping-up to the next generation, which is what we all eventually have to do. He leaves them to fully occupy Canaan’s land but in actuality Canaan’s religion and morals occupies the hearts of God’s people.

Israel never completely takes over the land and then they begin to start taking over the habits of the Canaanites. For all the people who say, “I don’t like the book of Joshua; it’s so violent.” Well, you got your wish. They never do finish ‘the violent’ takeover of Canaan or drive all the Canaanites out. Instead, the people of God became just as bad, just as immoral, and just as violent as the Canaanites. That was not God’s plan. That was sin. That’s the book of Judges. That generation failed and so did the next

one and the next. In fact, this continued for a couple hundred years. They started worshipping other gods and acting like the Canaanites and God punished them by having other peoples around them start to occupy parts of the land God promised Israel (never the whole country at this time). Sometimes Israel's enemies would come in at harvest time every year and take all the food they could find. Eventually, God's people would call upon Him in repentance. God would hear and then call on an individual to serve as a military leader. These people were called "judges" or "deliverers." These people include Gideon, Sampson, Barak who took orders from Deborah (the only female judge, she was also a prophet). The judges would fight these intruders and drive them out of Canaan. They very often face impossible odds but God would be with them and they would win. Then the people would be rescued from their oppressors and the land would know peace for awhile. Then Israel would eventually would go back to sinning and bring about another crisis by their rebellion against their God. It was a repeating cycle of sin, punishment, repentance, deliverance peace, return to sin and over the course of the book of Judges the overall picture is a constant spiral downward and downward as their behavior got worse and worse. By the end of the book of Judges the moral climate of God's people was just as horrible as anything that the pagans ever did. When people move away from God, life in that society dives right into the cesspool. Even if that society's people were originally supposed to be God's people. The fact is they are not following God's Word they are doing what they see as right in their own eyes.

The next book of the Bible after Judges is the book of Ruth. It tells the story of a gentile woman named Ruth. She has a Hebrew mother-in-law but both of their husbands are dead. Ruth adopts the God of her Hebrew mother-in-law and works very hard to take

care of her mother-in-law. Her faith and noble character bring her to the attention of a godly man from the tribe of Judah named Boaz. Boaz marries Ruth. Boaz and Ruth had a son. Later, their son had a son, who also had a son, whose name was David, which is the last word in the book of Ruth. David is in the line of Christ. Even in this dark era, possibly the darkest times in the Old Testament, God was still working on His Plan. He was still bringing about the Redeemer coming from the line of Judah. We cannot achieve redemption. He has to do it. He was still at work in the darkest hours of the Old Testament.

Scene 5 The Kingdom United

The book of Judges ends with a refrain: "We need a King." The author doesn't mean just any king, he means THE KING. Please God, send HIM, the one who was promised to us in Genesis 49.

God does not send HIM but He does move His Plan along to the next step: Israel finally gets a king. There are only three kings of the United Kingdom -- Saul, David and Solomon.

The first king is Saul. His story is found in 1 Samuel. God has been telling them since Genesis that they are going to have a King, but when the people ask for a king, God seems reluctant to give them one. The reason is because the people don't want the king for the right reasons. In fact, they are hoping to have a king to put all their hopes in so that they do not have to hope so much in the Lord. God allows them to have the kind of king they thought they wanted. His name was Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin. He starts

off okay but ends up a terrible failure. He is nearly driven mad with suspicion and jealousy. And in God's judgment, Saul is killed in battle.

Then comes the first of the kings from the tribe of Judah which is the tribe for the real king of Israel. His name is David. David is the ideal king and in many ways a pattern of the King who is to come.

David is a **“prophet-able”** king in two ways. First, David is a very **able** ruler. He's a successful king because he prays first and then he follows what God told him to do. He is the greatest of Israel's kings. Under David, Israel finally claims the full extent of the land God promised Abraham 1,000 years before. David and then his son, Solomon, oversee the largest territory that Israel ever had in its whole history.

But David is also a **prophet**. It's says that in the book of Acts and the book of Romans. He writes Psalms 22 which talks about someone who is being mocked and persecuted unjustly and there are crowds of people around Him saying, “If God loves you so much why doesn't He come and rescue you?” They are mocking him. And, this person is pierced in His hands and His feet. They can feel that His bones are out of joint somehow. They are gambling for his clothes. David saw these events happening to the Coming Hero, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and described them in Psalm 22. In Psalm 69, David predicted that someone close to the Redeemer would betray him. The Book of Psalms is a hymnal without the music and they have a lot of prophecy in them. David was a prophet.

So, David is a **“prophet-able”** king because he's an able and successful king but he is also a prophet. His prophecies are found in the book of Psalms.

David is also the royal line of the messiah. In 2 Samuel 7, David wants to build a house for God because all the time he's been in the wilderness, in all the times of history up until now they had only worshipped in the tabernacle. That's all they have ever had. David, in his heart wants to build a structure for God. God says to him, "Yeah, that's not a bad request, but you're not going to build a house for me I'm building a house for you." There's a play on words there. House means like a family line in the same way that Queen Elizabeth II of England is from the House of Windsor. Henry VIII of England was from the House of Tudor. There is going to be a House of David. There is going to be a royal line. The kings were supposed to come from Judah; well God has narrowed it down even further to David. So it's not just going to be any ancestor from Abraham, it's got to be from Judah; and it's not just anyone from the tribe of Judah, it's got to be someone related to David. That's the royal line. If you are a true king of Israel you have to be from the royal line of David. God also promised that that King, that son of David, God would see as His son and would be God's son. He will be King eternal. There will be no other King for He will always be King.

David's son Solomon becomes King. He is both good and bad. He built the temple, that's good. But he also has a large number of foreign wives who bring idolatry in a big way to Israel. He won't let them set them up in the city of Jerusalem, because that's where God's temple is but they worship outside the city and in the hills and high places surrounding the city. It's like when people climb a mountain, they feel closer to God. Well, the royal wives and their servants would go up into the hills and worship these gods in the high places and this gets introduced to the citizens who begin to adopt

those same practices. God does not bring judgment on Solomon because he is David's son. So He holds off, but after Solomon is gone he allows the kingdom to split in two.

Scene 6 The Kingdom Divided

The kingdom was united for just three kings but now, because of sin, the kingdom is split in two -- a northern half and a southern half. This part of the story takes place in First and Second Kings and First and Second Chronicles. The border that separates the two kingdoms is just north of Jerusalem. The south is called Judah because it consists of just Judah and one other tribe that is rather small. The north calls itself Israel because it has the other ten tribes of Israel. The kings of the southern kingdom are all from the line of David. None of the kings of the northern half are in David's royal line.

The first king of Israel builds golden calves. He demands that the people worship the Lord at the calf statues and not go back to Jerusalem, which is now a part of another country. He devises his own holy days and priesthood to replace the true worship that is supposed to take place at the temple in Jerusalem. Over time, the ten tribes in the northern half, Israel fall away from God. There are 19 kings of the northern kingdom. None of the 19 kings of Israel take down the golden calf that the first king of Israel built. None ever turn the people back to God. Some of the kings actively push pagan gods like Baal and even try to stamp out the worship of the true God. They are 0 for 19. Israel, the northern kingdom, is the wicked kingdom.

The southern half, Judah, also had nineteen kings. Eight of the nineteen kings are called good in the Bible. If the northern tribe is the wicked kingdom then the southern

tribes are the inconsistent kingdom. There are times when they follow God and other times when they mimic the northern tribes. There are, at the very least, some repentance and some revival. This makes Judah the more stable kingdom. Although both Israel and Judah had 19 kings, the nation of Judah lasts for a much longer time. Israel exists for 200 years and Judah for more than 300 years. The 19 kings of Judah are from the line of David. The 19 kings of Israel come from eight family lines and none of the lines had more than four consecutive kings. That is due to lots of political assassinations and overthrows. Judah by being at least somewhat godly has a much more stable leadership and society as a nation more blessed by God.

In your outline under Scene 6, I wrote that there are lots of kings. There are also lots of prophets as well. There were prophets before this time. We earlier said that Moses and David were prophets. Now, in this era, there is an explosion of prophets as God is calling Israel and Judah to return to him and receive His blessings rather than to face his punishment. Some prophets are sent primarily to the northern kingdom. Elijah and Elisha are sent to the northern kingdom and they are successful in stopping Baal worship from becoming the official religion of Israel but are unable in producing a national return to the Lord. Some prophets minister only in Judah. Isaiah and Jeremiah are prime examples. A few serve God in both Israel and Judah such as Micah and Amos; Jonah is sent to the gentile Assyrians.

There are two kinds of prophets. Some are what we can call the Doing kind and some are the Writing kind. The doing prophets often perform miracles. This is especially true of Elijah and Elisha. The doing prophets did not write books. Books such Kings and Chronicles tell what these prophets did. Elijah and Elisha are major examples of doing

prophets but there are other minor figures as well. Elijah and Elisha perform several miracles. Writing prophets generally do not do any miracles. They preached and their messages from God were written down and preserved for us in books that bear their names.

The writing prophets have three main themes to what they preach. They preached that unless the people repent of their idolatry and other sins that they are going to be removed from the land God gave them. Second, they assure the people of Judah that the Lord will bring them back to the land in 70 years. Third, they prophesy about the coming redeemer. God assured all that neither the sin of the people nor the coming punishment would ever hinder the Plan of God. The messiah was still coming. They would be able to recognize him because he would be born of a virgin in the town of Bethlehem. As a man, he would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey as a humble king. He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, mocked, beaten, pierced and killed. His death would be for the sins of the people but God would raise him back to life.²

Scene 7 The Exile

Some people say that it is hard to read the prophets because all it is 'judgment, judgment, judgment.' But the prophets keep warning and warning of a judgment (exile) that only happened once for Israel and once for Judah. There are little judgments before the big ones that are intended to push the people towards repentance and forgiveness and restoration but we are not reading of dozens of judgments we are reading of dozens of warnings before one big judgment: the exile. It would be more true to say God is like a

² Walter C. Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 237-242.

permissive parent than to see Him as an angry judge. He keeps warning and warning and warning them that punishment is coming.

“If you do that one more time. If you keep doing that you will be punished. I love you but stop doing that. I am warning you. I am serious. I am really warning you. Don’t make me punish you. I am still warning you.”

And then finally God drops the hammer on them and we say, “I can’t believe how angry and judgmental God seems in the Old Testament.” The warnings are evidence of both His love and holiness.

Finally, the people of Israel are taken away into exile in Assyria and they never come back as a nation. More than 100 years later, Judah is taken off the land by the Babylonians. Think of the first exile occurring around 700 BC and the other happening around 600 BC. The temple that Solomon built is destroyed. (The Assyrians get knocked off by the Babylonians. The Babylonians get knocked off by the Persians.)

Judah is into exile in Babylon for about seventy years. But, even before they leave they are told that they are not being rejected, they are only being punished and they will return. And they do come back.

When Assyria and Babylon conquered smaller countries—and there were a lot of them—they removed large numbers of the conquered people and dispersed them throughout their empires. They wanted the conquered to intermix, intermarry, settle down in the new place and forget about your homeland and culture. They also moved people to claim where you used to live. All your countrymen are so scattered that you are unable to unite and revolt. In a generation or two, your children and your children’s children will not even think of themselves as some other nationality. As you can imagine, this could

have been the destruction of the identity of God's people. However, God allows the Persian Empire to defeat the Babylonians while the Jews are still in exile. The Persian kings think differently and not only do the Persians send them back but they pay for the Jews to rebuild. There were about 50,000 who returned and Judah is the only Middle East country conquered in those days who ever came back to their land and rebuilt their nation.

They were told to go peacefully and live faithfully while in exile. Daniel and Esther are good examples of that. They serve God and their gentile rulers even though they are completely surrounded by people who are pagans and who do not even know their religion. They are successful without ever compromising their faith. They never give in to the idolatry and immorality of the gentiles around them or to the depression and despair of some of their fellow Jews with them in the exile. In the end they win the respect of everyone who knew them.

Scene 8 The Return from Exile

We are now at the last scene. God's people return to their land and they begin to rebuild all the cities that had been destroyed by the Babylonians. The focus of the Bible is on the rebuilding of Jerusalem especially the temple. Ezra and Nehemiah can be thought of as two of the chief builders. Under Nehemiah's leadership the physical part of the city is rebuilt. By the time he is done the people have a city and a temple in which to worship God and a new wall around Jerusalem. Ezra is a spiritual builder. He preaches the Law of Moses to the people and builds them up to function as the people of God again. He trains

the people in the Word of God in order to obey the Word. Ezra and Nehemiah remind the people why they were punished in the time of the exile and they charge God's people to obey Him so that they can receive His blessings and not face His punishment again.

Malachi, at the end of the Old Testament adds some very important details. I call it: *"Coming soon to a **temple** near you...God. But, first, this **announcer!**"*

First, Malachi tells us in Chapter 3 that God is coming to the temple and also the person who has been promised all these years (here called the messenger of the covenant) but before that happens there will be an announcer who introduces the Messiah to his people. Chapter 4 tells us that this announcer comes in the spirit of Elijah the prophet. He reminds people of what they read in their Bibles about Elijah.

Many people have noticed that hardly anyone in the Bible is described. We don't know what Jesus looked like. There is a mention in the Old Testament that he had a beard because it is prophesied that his tormentors would pluck it out. We don't know what hardly anyone looks like in the Bible because the Bible doesn't look at people and describe their appearance; it looks at people and describes their behavior. Our society is more appearance oriented but the Bible looks more at what a person is on the inside. What they do is who they are. That is why it is so surprising that Elijah's clothes are described. Elijah wears a hair coat with a leather belt. Again, he's one of the few people whose appearance is described. Then we turn to the New Testament and early on we see a man in a hair coat with a leather belt who says, "I now baptize you with water so that the one who comes after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." All John the Baptist had to do was appear in front of many and they thought he was just like Elijah, because of the rare description found in the Old Testament of Elijah's clothing.

These people from Judah had put away idols. They now waited for the Messiah. They are told that He is going to come, very soon, and someone will come first and announce Him. That's the end of the Old Testament. In many ways it is incomplete. It lacks an ending especially in that the central promise of a Redeemer is not fulfilled within its pages. That is a story for another day. Or maybe another workshop. I trust that what we have said today makes both the Old Testament and its complement called the New Testament more understandable.

Thank you. Please stand and let us do all the hand motions before I ask you to take the Old Testament quiz again so that I can see how well this workshop did its job.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT OUTCOMES

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first segment, I will explain why I did what I did by answering a series of questions that I put to myself for the sake of my readers.

Second, I will narrate what occurred when I taught this project (contained in chapter 4) three times at the Wee Kirk conference (WK) at the Presbyterian Conference Center in Montreat, NC, in October, 2010 and twice more at the Christian Life Conference also at the Montreat Conference Center in July, 2011.

In the third section, I will relate the analysis of the results of this project. I will convey the comments I received and I will also impart the results of my analysis of the quizzes I gave before and after my seminars. I will also conclude with a few things I hope to do with this project upon completion of this thesis-project.

Why I Did What I Did

In this section I have asked myself a number of questions and then answered them. These answers taken together will explain why I taught this seminar the way that I did.

Why Did I Use Maps?

I used maps for several reasons. First, I wanted to give the participants an awareness of the physical space in which the Old Testament took place (Richter and Stott). In the same way that the Old Testament characters were actually flesh and blood people, so the events were actual events in time and space. They took place at a certain point in human history and on certain locations on the earth. As Henrietta Mears wrote, “Maps are indispensable at helping students to visualize and localize important geographical areas.”¹

Second, a good Bible map can help give the basic outline of the Old Testament. As Henrietta Mears observed, “As you build the story of the Bible around these places (on a map) you see the whole history in chronological order.”² The map section at the end of some Bibles almost always has the maps displayed in Biblical chronological order. If, for instance, the first map shows Abraham’s travels and the last of several maps shows the journeys of Paul, then a person thumbing through each map in order gets an idea of the biblical storyline.

Third, I used a map for the sake of visual learners. Even if people do not consult printed maps as much as they once did, maps have not gone away. The paper maps have been replaced with maps on an electronic screen per GPS, MapQuest, and Google maps. Maps are concrete and visual and I was sure that they would be a big help to people who need things to be concrete and visual in order to learn them.

¹ Henrietta C. Mears, *What the Bible Is All About* (Ventura, CA: Regal books, 2002), 682.

² Mears, *What the Bible Is All About*, 18.

I decided to use a map that would rest on an easel and that would be large enough for everyone to easily see throughout the seminar. I went to the internet and restricted myself to maps that are offered free of charge without copyrights. Among those maps (and there are plenty), I looked for a map with simple and clear lines. I did not want an overly busy map. I did not want any cities marked. I did not want colored sections or shading of any kind to denote ancient boundaries. I would mark that with a white board marker if necessary while I taught. In the end I found a simple white map with blue lines that was just what I was looking for.³ It restricts itself to what I consider to be vital Old Testament geographical markers: the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the Sea of Galilee, Jordan River and Dead Sea for the eastern border of Canaan; the Mediterranean, the Red Sea (so that the triangular Sinai region is pronounced) and the Nile region in Egypt.

There was a problem with the map I found. It could not be used as I first saw it. It had numbers on it from 1 through 11 with lines and arrows showing the order of Old Testament events and making the map too cluttered for my use. The numbers on the map correspond to my outline but I would have prevented me from marking my own numbers 1 through 8 as I was actually teaching my seminar.

Thankfully, some of my eighth grade students at the Christian school where I teach showed me a computer program, called “Paint”, which enabled to “white out” the numbers. I saved the doctored map on a thumb drive. I took the thumb drive to a print shop and hired them to produce a 24”by 18” laminated map. This map can be rolled up for easy storage or travel but during the seminars it was mounted to a stiff poster board

³ The map I originally found can be seen at the following website: Paul J. Bucknell, “Old Testament Geographical Historical Survey: Understanding the OT message by Maps,” Biblical Foundations for Freedom Web site, http://www.foundationsforfreedom.net/References/OT/OTSurvey/OT_Map_Survey.html (accessed Dec. 18, 2011).

with two sided tape that works well in holding the map down flat when needed but can also be easily peeled off when no longer needed. A printed paper copy of the map was included in the handout I gave to each participant.

Why Did I Use The Room As A Map?

Sometime after I taught at the Wee Kirk Conference, I had a phone conversation with Rev. Dr. Charlie Boyd who is interested enough in the Bible's Big Picture to make a point of preaching on it in his church and who authored *What God Has Always Wanted*, a Bible overview for young children. Charlie urged me to consider using an idea from the Walk Thru the Bible seminars and "turn the room you teach in into a map of the Bible." I decided to try it for the sake of this project. I would use the room itself as a map and see how well it could work when I was scheduled to teach this project again as a seminar at the Christian Life Conference in Montreat, NC in July 2011.

As I thought about how to use the room as a map, something from my own life helped me to formulate what my goal for the room map should be. I grew up in the Quad Cities area of Illinois on the Mississippi river. The Mississippi runs north to south for most of its course. However, there is a large bend near my hometown and there the river runs east to west for several miles before bending back to resume heading south. Therefore, the river is directly north of my hometown. In addition, the major streets in my hometown run parallel or perpendicular to the Mississippi. This set of circumstances provided me with a mental map of the compass directions. I grew up being able to

intuitively sense which way was the river (even if I could not see it) Consequently, I always knew which way was north.

Where the other three directions lie is then realized pretty easily. I still have that sense of direction whenever I visit my hometown. I have only rarely had a keen sense of direction since I moved away from home. I now live in central South Carolina and I cannot tell the compass directions very well there.

I hoped that if I could turn the room into a Bible map then I might be able to help people develop a sense of direction in terms of the Bible lands. This would enable them to possess a mental map of where the major events of the Old Testament took place. They might then be able to picture themselves standing in Canaan with the Mediterranean Sea to their left (or west) and the Jordan to their right (east). They could then “know” that Sinai is to the south and that Assyria and Babylon (the lands of the exile) are to the northeast. An acquired sense of direction in terms of biblical places could help people, in the words of Henrietta Mears, “build the story of the Bible in chronological order around these places” in their heads.

When I laid out the room as a map I started with the central aisle. I laid a zigzag length of yarn string on the floor to represent the Jordan River. I made a loop at the base of the podium to stand for the Sea of Galilee. The Dead Sea was an elongated loop at the other end of the seating area from the podium. I wrote the words “Assyria, Babylon and Persia” on large sheets of flip chart paper and the word “Egypt” on another sheet. I hung the first group of sheets in the front of the room on the right hand side from the attendees’ perspective. The sheet labeled Egypt I hung in the back left corner, again from the attendees’ orientation. The wall directly to their left was called the Mediterranean Sea. A

piled up bunch of chairs in the back became the wilderness. The tallest stack of chairs had a shining lamp on it and represented Mt. Sinai.

As I gave the “Old Testament from 30,000 Feet” part of my talk, I walked around the room following the Biblical order. I had people get up and ‘cross’ the Jordan River. When the united kingdom splits into two kingdoms I had people move their chairs to make a divide between the first two rows and the back two rows. They also stuck their tongues out at each other to express the discord between Israel and Judah.

Later, in the college track class, the people designated “Israel” had to get up and walk towards the sheet labeled Assyria. Then the people in the southern kingdom of Judah had to get up and move towards the sheet labeled Babylon. However, unlike the historical northern kingdom I let them return to their seats.

The room as a map is a more dynamic means of teaching than a static, non-moving wall map. The map on an easel stays put and I write on it. The room as a map involves much more motion on my part and also on the part of the attendees to the extent that they walked around the room with me (this probably works better with 20 people than it would with a large crowd of say 200 people.) The moving around may help kinesthetic learners. It also woke up anyone who had a big lunch right before my seminar and whose full stomach caused them to feel a little drowsy.

Why Give People A Copy Of My Outline?

I want them to have something they can see while I talk—for visual learners as

well as the auditory learners. I want them to have something to take home with them if they might look at it again and teach others from it.

Why Give The People An Outline With Blanks To Fill In?

Here, I borrowed a practice that several teachers have used in classes I attended over the years. In fact, I believe that Dr. Sid Buzzell used a handout outline with blanks with my cohort during our third residency. I used this method because I wanted people to be actively listening while I lectured. They must listen carefully to know what to write in the blanks.

The danger is having too many blanks that make the speaker stop while the group is still writing in answers so that people do not fall behind or cause them to sit with their heads down disrupting eye contact with the seminar teacher. I realize that in the future, I need to read more about the educational effectiveness of this method.

Why Did I Start And Conclude The Seminar With A Quiz?

I quizzed the participants both before and after my seminar in order to assess improvement in their understanding of the Old Testament storyline due that my seminar possibly brought about. My quiz is adapted from the test that Gary Burge wrote to test the Biblical knowledge of his incoming freshmen at Wheaton College in Illinois.⁴ The “self-

⁴ A copy of Gary Burge’s test can be found at <http://www.covenantnews.com/daveblack050513.htm> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

tests” found in *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* were additional help.⁵ The content of my questions meant to reflect the major figures and events that I emphasized in the seminar.

At the Wee Kirk Conference, my quiz had three questions to answer both before and after the seminar. One question asked attendees to number five Old Testament characters in order. Two other questions asked them to number five Old Testament events in order.

The three questions were:

1. Place these events in their correct Biblical order (number 1-5)

_____ The giving of the law at Mt. Sinai
_____ David becomes king
_____ The Fall
_____ The Exodus led by Moses
_____ The Flood of Noah

2. Place these events in their correct Biblical order (number 1-5)

_____ The leaders of Israel are called ‘judges’
_____ The kingdom splits into two nations
_____ The Jews are exiled to Babylon
_____ The temple is built in Jerusalem
_____ Joshua fights the battle of Jericho

3. Place the following Biblical characters in the correct Biblical order (number 1-5)

_____ Moses
_____ Adam
_____ David
_____ Solomon
_____ Abraham

⁵ Max E. Anders, *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004).

My quiz rests on the assumption that persons who can put key events and characters in chronological order probably possess a basic mental overview of the Old Testament.

After the seminar, people were given a fourth question in which they were asked to write out my eight Old Testament scenes as well as they could remember them. They did not have to use my titles or my wording as long as I could recognize what they meant. This question was meant to assess participants' recall of my overview of the Old Testament.

People were allowed to consult the large map on the easel or the paper map in the handouts. They were not allowed to use my two page outline handout. I monitored them well enough to know that my attendees did not use it to help answer this quiz. I included a fifth question that asked people to rate themselves as to how much they knew before they came to the seminar. I had intended that question to assess the difference between what people thought they knew and what they in fact knew of the Old Testament. I found that question 5 did not provide any real information seems to me in hindsight to be needlessly asked. I did not ask this question at the CLC.

I was aware that listening to one 60-90 minute seminar might not make a difference in their understanding and that not everyone will benefit equally. Some may already know everything I taught so that it was only a refresher for them and they scored well or even perfectly both before and after my seminar. Some may know so little or be so confused by the vast, sprawling nature of the Old Testament that one seminar might not make a substantial difference.

A fifth question was included on the Wee Kirk quiz that asked people to rate themselves how much they knew before they came to the seminar. I deemed that question to be superfluous and did not ask it at the CLC.

More substantially, I changed the first three questions from having five items to number to pairs of Old Testament characters or events. The people were to circle the Old Testament person or event that comes first in the Bible's Story on the pre-test and put an X on the one that comes first when they took the post-test.

I thought that five items to order might take longer to think through and keep straight in their minds. Also, the nature of the original questions might make people get two or more items in the wrong order when they have one thing out of place. I worded my hoped for outcomes statement accordingly.

Why Did I Include Two Obscure, Strange Bible Stories?

At the Wee Kirk seminar, I included two Old Testament stories in the participants' handout packet. I purposely chose stories that I imagined would be unfamiliar to the average churchgoer. Either the people have never read them or they skipped over them or they read them especially the one in Genesis but they wondered how that ever got into the Bible. The first story involves a widowed man who meant to have sexual relations with a prostitute but instead, unknowingly, has relations with his widowed ex-daughter-in-law. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to twin boys. Worse yet, it seems that God condones it all. The other story describes a violent coup d' tat

which leads to a reign of blood and terror. Eventually, the people of God kill the usurper and re-establish the rightful king who is only seven years old.

At Wee Kirk, I had half of the people read one story and half read the other at the end of my presentation but before they took my post-test.

People were divided into groups of three. They were to read the Biblical story, discuss it among themselves and then have a spokesperson report to the class. The question they were to discuss and attempt to answer was “How does the Big Picture of the Old Testament help us understand the importance of this particular story?”

Almost every group had at least one person who saw that in 2 Kings 11, Joash is in the line of David and so the saving of his life preserved the royal line and line of the coming Messiah. If Joash had been killed with the others, there would have been no Hero coming to save us. The story in Genesis 38 makes a similar point. Judah’s line is also the line of the coming Messiah and it is in danger of coming to an end. What Tamar did perpetuated the line and God allowed her to solve the problem that way. Both Tamar, her son Perez and Joash are in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1.

The point of this exercise was to show the group how the Big Story helps us understand the shorter, individual stories and even make sense of them when on their own they are hard to understand. Also, I wanted to show them how individual stories contribute to the Big Story.

Why Did I Reinforce My Lecture With Hand Motions?

As was related in chapter 3, the idea to devise and teach hand motions came from the Rev. Paul Toms. Paul had participated in a Walk Thru the Bible Old Testament seminar and had been very impressed with the idea of using motion as a memory aid. He thought that the hand motions were the most distinctive trait of the WTTB seminar. He did not tell me what the WTTB hand signs are. He only recommended that I come up with my own hand signs in order to reinforce my main lecture points and to reach the kinesthetic learners in my seminars. The idea of hand motions was not an original part of this thesis-project when I started in May 2010. I am by instinct a lecturing, story-telling teacher. Lecturing reaches some of my audience. The Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell has taught me to consider the learning styles of the whole audience. I included maps handouts in order to communicate to the more visually oriented segment of my audience. The hand motions were included into this project in order to teach the individuals who learn by doing in addition to teaching those who learn by hearing or seeing.

It was also hoped that hand motions will be a long-lasting memory aid. My attendees were given a handout. They were allowed to keep and take home the handout. Hopefully, none of those handouts were misplaced or discarded. Hopefully, most of the participants still are able to consult their printed materials. Realistically, I know that many people no longer have access to the papers I gave them. However, they were also taught the hand motions. The motions cannot be mislaid. They cannot be harmed by having liquids spilled on them! Those who have forgotten the motions have done so

because we only had only one seminar session together. But as long as they remember the hand motions, my students have a lasting reminder of the overall story of the Old Testament.

In the future, I must give my participants more follow-up and rehearsal. Therefore, if I am able to work this project into a booklet or online teaching tool, I would like to make available either a written out demonstration of the motions (as I have included here) **or** a series of picture demonstrations as sometimes used in product assembly instructions **or** a short video clip that will be accessible online. As the hand signs are at this time, they reinforce the basic flow of the outline of the scenes. I am considering rewording the outline and the words that go with the hand motions so that the motions more nearly reinforce the exact wording of the eight scenes.

However, I decided not to change the wording until after I taught this project. By doing so I hoped to see whether it was the outline or the hand motions that helped the most number of people to grasp the basic flow of my Old Testament outline. The wording they used in answering question 4 would give it away. I will report those findings in section 3.

Why Was The Seminar 90 Minutes Long?

I designed my seminar to be delivered in about 90 minutes because that is the most time I can get at the two conferences where I taught and because that is also probably the most time that a local church would give someone to teach a seminar. In fact I was told to aim for 75 minutes at Wee Kirk so that people have time for questions and

discussion. The length of all seminars at the CLC is 60 minutes. At each place I was able to end on time. A person teaching this project or a similar seminar must keep to the script. Allow for questions but beware of those that will pull you off topic or will require a lengthy answer. To teach the Old Testament storyline with sufficient review, the leader must keep to their planned schedule and not allow himself to be sidetracked or to get wordy. Now for section two.

What Occurred When I Taught My Project

I first taught this project at the Wee Kirk Conference (called WK for the rest of this chapter) in Montreat, NC on Oct. 18-19, 2010. I was asked to teach three times in the two days: 10:30 AM and 8:30 PM on the 18th and 9:00 AM on October 19. Each time slot was 90 minutes long. However, the planning committee asked to dedicate a few minutes at the end for questions and answers.

In preparing to teach this seminar, I made up the hand outs that my participants would use. First, I copied and pasted my finished two page outline into a new Microsoft document. I then deleted key points of my outline while leaving a blank, underlined space where participants would fill in the blank with the missing word(s). Then I highlighted my copy of the outline so I would know while I was speaking where the participants' outline had blanks in order to make sure that I gave them the word(s) needed to fill the blanks.

When the seminars actually began, I had someone stationed near the entrance to give everyone a handout and a pencil or pen. The handouts contained: a copy of the large

map; the two page outline with blanks to fill in; two rather unknown and neglected Old Testament stories that would allow the participants to use the Big Picture story of the Old Testament in order to make sense of two individual stories that seem strange or not clearly connected to the rest of scripture (to be discussed at the very end of my seminar if time permitted); and my assessment tool consisting of a quiz to be taken immediately before and after the seminar. The quiz was designed and distributed in order to help me assess my participants' comprehension of the Old Testament storyline before and after my seminar.

After the participants took about three minutes to answer questions 1-3 on the pre-test, I began my talk.

In the first session, I waited until after the fourth of the eight scenes to introduce the first of the hand motions. At first, people laughed and rolled their eyes as if they thought I was joking. It was a little intimidating and, for a brief moment, I thought of discarding the hand motions and to just press on lecturing. Then I remembered that this project required it and I would not know how to report that I had lost my nerve and had not used the motions so I persisted and in mere seconds people said "OK then," loosened up and actually had fun with them. No one sat out. Every person joined me in performing the hand motions.

For the remainder of that first session at WK, I introduced a new hand motion at the end of every scene (5-8). I would then review all the motions that I had taught up to that point. At the close of the eighth and final scene, we repeated all the motions twice. When I taught the second and third sessions at Wee Kirk, I taught and reviewed the motions at the end of every second scene: the second, fourth, sixth and eighth.

During the first seminar, I marked the map with Expo white board markers. They did not work well. I had hoped that just a quick wipe would erase anything I had written on the map. Instead, the marks I made soaked through the lamination and did not erase easily. One of the participants in the first seminar volunteered to clean it for me in time for the second seminar. They got it to look like new only after several hard-working minutes of rubbing with a cloth.

For the second and third seminars, I used mini post-its on which I wrote the numbers 1-8. I stuck them on the map that matched the scene I would be discussing and I left them on for the rest of the seminar so people can do their own review as we go along. Later, at the Christian Life Conference, I used “grease pencils” (also called “china markers.”)

I was able to monitor the before and after quizzes well enough to give me confidence in their results. There was some confusion at Wee Kirk as to the wording of two questions. First, two or three people who took my short quiz were not sure of the meaning of the term “the Fall.” I need to make sure that I do not use theological terms for those who are not familiar with them. Second, three or four people wrote “which temple?” next to the item in question two that says, “The temple is built in Jerusalem.” If they asked me during the before or after test times I told them that I meant the first temple. I clarified the wording of those two items in the quiz I gave at the Christian Life Conference.

I did a few other things differently for my seminar at the Christian Life Conference. First, I went to the room assigned to my seminar and began to turn it into a map according to the idea I had first received from Rev. Dr. Charlie Boyd and had

learned more about by researching Walk Thru the Bible ministries online. My son, Ben, who would later help pass out pencils and the handout, helped me set up the room.

I tore off some sheets from a newsprint flip chart and attached them to the walls with thumb tacks onto the 'cork strips' that the conference center already has mounted on the walls. I put Egypt in the back left corner and Assyria/Babylon in the front right corner with Persia hanging and above them to suggest that it is even farther away. I set the room up from the perspective of the participants. The front of the room was to be North on the map.

Jordan River, my first idea, was the aisle down the middle of the room. I laid some yarn out to represent the Jordan River. It had a loop at one end that was an oval and the ball of yarn at the end to be the Dead Sea. A pile of chairs stood for the wilderness of Sinai with one stack of chairs having a lamp on it to stand for Mt. Sinai.

When the kingdom splits into two at the start of scene 6, I had the people who sat on the "Canaan side of the Jordan River" stand up and stick their tongues out at each other. The two rows closest to me represented the northern kingdom of Israel and the last two rows represented Judah.

The seminar at the CLC started at 2:00 PM, Sunday, July 3, 2011. I had fewer people at the CLC than I did at the Wee Kirk even though the former is a much larger conference. My seminar had more competition at the CLC. It was offered at the same time as nine others. Mine had the second or third most participants. The most attended seminar, with over 100 people, addressed the crisis in our denomination with the door being opened to the ordination of unmarried, sexually immoral people just two months

before the conference. I was disappointed but under those circumstances I thought that the attendance at my seminar was not too bad.

I had the map on an easel but since I was also using the room as a map referred to the large map less frequently than I did at Wee Kirk. I used it mostly in the early part of the seminar. As I proceeded, I used only the room map. I moved around the room map when I taught the Bible at 30,000 feet. I walked over to Mesopotamia then to Canaan then to Egypt and then Sinai. I turned on the lamp then turned it off had used the light of my cell phone to stand for the light that led the people. I crossed the Jordan over the yarn string. I split the seats on the west side of the Jordan to represent the split into two kingdoms. I walked back and forth between Canaan and Assyria and then Babylon for the exile.

As before, I again coached people in the hand motions. This time, I taught the first motions after scene 2 then after that I showed them the new motion at the end of every scene. I reviewed all the previous ones immediately following the introduction of a new motion.

I also included the story of Tamar on the last page of the handout but there was no time to read it. One person at end did read it after her test and told me what she thought the significance was. She gave me her answer in the form of a question: "What Tamar did continues the line of the Messiah, right?" I told her, "Yes, you've got it."

After my seminar I was asked to teach it again but in a more informal session with a group of eight college students. I did not use the pre-tests or the hand-outs or the map on the wall with them. I used only the room as a map. I was in a different room, called the Lakeside Room, with one of the two long walls facing Lake Susan. That wall made an

obvious Mediterranean Sea and was so designated. Since the actual Mediterranean, being to the east of the Bible lands, the corner of the opposite wall was labeled Assyria, Babylon and Persia. Its opposite corner was labeled Egypt. The Lakeside room has cork strips on the wall like the other room had and we hung large newsprint on the cork strips with tacks. From that corner we stepped off a few feet north and east and put a piano bench and chairs and stuff and called it the wilderness and Sinai. We laid my ball of yarn to make the Sea of Galilee, Jordan River and Dead Sea. From the Dead Sea one takes a giant step north and west. We put something there, a hymnal or Bible or a small box like a jigsaw puzzle box or board game box will do and call it Jerusalem. When I walked the college students through the Bible's story, the group got up and crossed the Jordan River with me.

I laid a large piece of newsprint on the floor to stand for the land of Canaan. I took a marker and made a line map of Israel—coastline, bump for Mt. Hermon, Sea of Galilee, Jordan, Dead Sea, Jerusalem, Egypt and Mesopotamia. I wrote a line for the division of the United Kingdom at the time I mentioned it, I wrote the numbers of the eight scenes where they principally take place. I had the group move to each spot of the room map as I discussed it. They crossed over Jordan with me, raised their swords with Joshua and separated into two groups when the kingdoms divided, etc.

When they did sit down, they were scattered around the room and at no time did I stand up front as in a lecture. I stood mostly in or near Canaan but moved around a lot. I had no notes or cards with me. I spoke from memory. It was more like an interactive conversation. I waited until the end to teach them the hand motions at the end.

Analysis Of The Results Of This Project

First I relate comments and evaluations I received. Later in this section I will analyze my own data especially as it compares with the outcomes I had intended.

One of the most gratifying things about this thesis-project has been the comments of those who have heard me teach it. People told me that they had learned a lot and had had fun doing so. At the Wee Kirk, whenever people stopped to thank me, I asked them to tell me what it was that especially helped to learn and remember the Big Picture of the Old Testament. Ten people said it was the hand motions and two said the map. Of those who especially liked the motions, some confessed that they had thought, at first, that the hand motions were silly but they had ended up enjoying them and found they had stuck in their minds. They told me that the motions were helpful in remembering the sequence of Old Testament events.

At a mealtime in the conference dining hall, I witnessed some people at a table practicing the hand motions together.

As stated above two people thought that my map was the most helpful aid in grasping the Big Picture. One woman told me that ordinarily she is not a “map person” but that mine was very effective and helpful. It “made geography exciting for the first time.”

After I taught the first time at the CLC, a man named Jack Humphries told me that he had also attended one of the seminars at the Wee Kirk. He told me that the standing map I employed more freely at Wee Kirk helped him more than the room map because it’s more “concrete and physical.” The standing map also came with the paper

version in the handouts and it helped him to mark on his copy while I marked on mine. Then while I spoke, his copy was always in his possession and could be easily referred to. Mr. Humphries thought that the act of marking it helped to reinforce what I taught and helped him to develop a mental map of the Old Testament. Plus, he was able to take a paper map home with him unlike the room as a map. He preferred the wall map to the room as a map and recommended that I employ the former map more than I did at the CLC.

However, not everyone agreed with Mr. Humphries. Sue Havlichek of Morehead City, NC later that day said, “I am a visual learner. The room as a map helped me to ‘see’ the Big Picture mentally. The hand motions were also a help.”

Since there is more than one kind of learning style and those styles will be present in any group of people attending a seminar, some people will be helped more by one map than the other. I want to teach everyone with my seminar and not leave out anyone just because their way of learning differs from mine or from the majority. Therefore, in the future, it seems best to me to use both maps when I teach this project.

Other verbal comments I received included:

A former Navy pilot liked the use of “30,000 feet” and “10,000 feet.” He liked being told ahead of time where I was going. He also thought that the comparison to the modern world gave handles to my material and made them graspable.

The seminar at the CLC was videotaped with my permission by Mr. Brad Long, director of Presbyterian Reformed Ministries International, a renewal group in the PC (USA). Mr. Long wants to use the seminar in PRMI teaching seminars overseas. He had two comments for me. First, he noticed that as I taught I did not keep some of my scenes

distinct enough. For example, as I spoke I clearly introduced scene 3 (the Exodus and Wilderness) and then told the Old Testament story from the Exodus right through Joshua and the conquest of the land. Then I realized that I was in Scene 4 without having introduced it and all I could do then was to say something to the effect of “Please notice folks that we are now half way into Scene 4.” Then I proceeded to summarize the Judges era and clearly marked off Scene 5. The problem is that I get wound up and find it hard to keep even to my self-imposed outline. It takes great concentration and self-discipline for me to speak exactly the outline on the page people are holding. The people in my seminar need to know at all times which scene I am on. I talked to Brad Long two days later and asked if maybe the problem was my choice of scenes. I asked him if he thought I had too many. He thought that I should keep the scenes as I have them but to work on and memorize how I will start and conclude each scene and how I will transition from scene to scene in order to make each scene more distinct in the minds of my hearers.

Secondly, he recommended that if I publish my project that I include a filmed version on disc or online because part of what made my seminar enjoyable to him was my “passion” for the topic which would translate as well, he said, into print.

I also received helpful comments written on the backs of my Quiz and also on the conferences evaluation sheets which the organizers of the two conferences shared with me. These include:

Some of the older people could not see all the numbers on the big map when I was forced to use small post-its during the last two seminars at Wee Kirk. It seems that no one complained about the size of my writing at the CLC when I used a grease pencil on the map.

In addition, I found that even among pastors and elders and their spouses two or three people were not sure what “The Fall” meant and some who thought they understood that term could get it confused with the term “The Exile.” The teacher of the Big Picture must decide whether to replace such theological terms with what they hope will be an easy to comprehend equivalent or to borrow and spend a little time to explain key theological terms.

One pastor found my seminar to be only what he learned in seminary. Therefore, it was “basic and repetitive of what I already knew.” I am not teaching this seminar for the advanced Bible student but for the average one. None of them have said I was too basic. They say, in the words of one respondent, that they “knew bits and pieces before” but I had helped them put the pieces together. I find it interesting that between the two conferences at least a quarter of the people who attended are pastors and yet only one found the seminar to be mere review of what they already knew. I only wish my seminar were review and far too basic. However, the sad truth is that Presbyterian seminaries have become poor places to learn the scriptures. Several pastors told me informally that they were not taught a basic overview of the Bible in seminary. The Bible at their school was taught in fragments. My seminar benefited those pastors.

I was gratified to see that people thought my seminar to be “tons of fun” and that it was both “well thought out and delivered with humor.”

I am concerned that two participants wrote that they needed more “time to comprehend” and that there was “not enough time to get through the material” I had. A third suggested that I divide the Old Testament into two seminars.

Some weeks after the Wee Kirk, I received a copy of the scores that participants had given my seminar.

The ratings go from 1 (not helpful) to 6 (very helpful). My seminar's tallies were:

1	0 participants
2	1 participant
3	2 participants
4	0 participants
5	10 participants
6	23 participants (one respondent gave me a 6 + + (and no, my wife was not able to attend the conference)

The 36 people who filled out the evaluations gave me a 5.44 average score.

Analysis of the Before and After Quizzes

Did I teach Bible stories? No. My seminar presupposes knowledge of Bible stories. It does not help those who do not know anything of the Bible or who have not attempted to read the Old Testament. It helps those who have read it but got confused on the story or could not make much sense of it or who wondered why some stories are there or who know the stories taught in VBS and SS and in sermons but never saw the storyline before.

Rather the question is **“Did I help people to put the Bible stories they know in order, did I give them an overview framework to put these events and characters in order?”**

To answer that question let us see how well participants measured up to my hoped for outcomes. How did the actual results compare with my intended educational outcomes?

I had intended that with the helps that I have given which are: the hand and body motions, the map, and the outline in the handout (participants copy has missing words to fill in during the course of the seminar), participants will be able to:

1. Comprehend a basic outline of the Old Testament: Know the eight chunks of the Old Testament and the theme of each chunk (from the “Old Testament at 10,000 Feet”) by being able to write them down right after the seminar concludes. It is hoped that at least 50% will put the eight scenes in order.

The goal of 50% was chosen somewhat arbitrarily. I did not know what results to expect. I just decided that if half the people could recall and write each of the eight scenes in order after just one 90 minute session that I would be pleased. They were encouraged to use their own words. They were asked not to use their notes but they could look at my large map and they could recite the hand motions quietly to themselves.

I was primarily looking for what would be the peoples’ ability to place the Old Testament scenes in correct order immediately following their participation in my seminar. Three people in ten filled out the scenes perfectly. A large percentage of participants (87.5%) could place the scenes in order although they made mistakes or left out information that did not change the basic order of the Old Testament scenes.

Goal 1 was not met but it was close.

Table 1. Results of participants writing out the eight OT scenes in order

Number of scenes written in order	Number of participants	Per cent of participants
All scenes in order	27	30.7%
All scenes in order with 1 mistake that did not affect order of scenes	14	15.9%
All scenes in order with 2 mistakes that did not affect order of scenes	13	14.8%
All scenes in order with 3 mistakes that did not affect order of scenes	14	15.9%
All scenes in order with 4 or more mistakes that did not affect order of scenes	9	10.2%
One or more scenes out of order	11	12.5%
	88 total	100.0%

The “mistakes” were some kind of deviation from what I taught them. Most of the mistakes did not affect the order of my eight Old Testament scenes. For instance, some people wrote “Creation” for scene 1 without referring to the Fall. Some people left out Abraham or the exile but often would have the rest of their scenes in order. Some people combined two scenes into one and would then divide some other scene into two in order to end up with the same number of scenes I have, which is eight. A dozen or so listed Joshua without Judges. Another dozen wrote Judges without naming Joshua. Their outline was still in order but not as complete as I gave them.

I analyzed the top 54 answers. These are the people who got the order of the Old Testament scenes correct and made zero, one or two mistakes or deviations. The following chart lists the mistakes that the top group made. It shows the weakest areas of Old Testament knowledge for my participants.

Table 2. Number and nature of mistakes made by participants in writing out the eight OT scenes (in order), listed by scene

Old Testament Scene	Number of Mistakes Made	Nature of Mistakes Made	
Creation & Fall (Scene 1)	7	Listed Creation without the Fall	7
The Promise to Abraham & Patriarchs (Scene 2)	11	Did not list Abraham & Patriarchs	11
Exodus & Sinai (Scene 3)	2	Did not list the Exodus	2
Joshua & Judges (Scene 4)	32	Listed only Joshua	12
		Listed only Judges	13
		Did not list Joshua or Judges	7
United Kingdom (Scene 5)	5	Did not list the United Kingdom	5
Divided Kingdom (Scene 6)	7	Did not list the Divided Kingdom	7
The Exile (Scene 7)	17	Did not list the Exile	17
Return from Exile (Scene 8)	3	Did not list the Return from Exile	3

One can quickly see that it was scenes 4 and 7 that gave people the most trouble. It appears to me that they made mistakes with Joshua-Judges and the exile because these are the two areas of the Old Testament that people know the less about. My guess is that they do not read these portions of the Old Testament or hear many sermons about them. Dr. David Larsen of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School thinks that many church people find Judges depressing or disturbing. I have heard several Presbyterians say that Joshua is too violent. The exile may be seen as too sad. Whatever the reasons may be, these two

areas are especially weak points in Christians' knowledge of the parts of the Old Testament story. This makes it hard to help assemble all the parts for my listeners. Some parts they really do not know well.

One person listed Joshua and Judges separately. I did not count that as a mistake. Neither did I count the eight people who combined scenes 5 and 6 into one scene because these "errors" do not alter the Old Testament story.

I am very puzzled by the fact that 11 of the 54 left out any reference to Abraham and the promises of God which led to the coming of Christ. I do not know what to think of that. My only guess is that some churchgoers have only heard and read of Abraham as an example of faith. They have assessed him in moral terms but have not seen that the most important thing about him for people today is that with His promises Abraham, God gets the gospel plan underway.

I also examined the actual wording of all those who put the Old Testament scenes in order no matter how many mistakes they made. I wanted to discern if people had learned the scenes primarily from my outline or from the hand motions or from a combination of the two.

This was the wording of my outline:

1. *Creation & Rebellion*; 2. *First Promise*; 3. *Exodus*;
4. *Conquest/Conquered or Joshua/Judges*; 5. *The Kingdom United*;
6. *The Kingdom Divided*; 7. *The Exile*; 8. *Return & Restoration*

The Hand Motions were worded differently and were spoken as follows:

Creation. Fall.

Suitcase in hand, Abraham looking for the Promised Land

Egypt--Chains on. Exodus--Chains Off. Ten Commandments

Draw your sword. This land is ours

Thanks for the robe Judge...But we need a King.

*We get a king. Crown broken.
Exile to Babylon. Chains again?!? 70 years, chains off.
Return. Rebuild the temple. Waiting for the Messiah.*

In order to analyze the wording that participants followed, I constructed a table. The results show that there is more than one way for people to learn the major scenes of the Old Testament.

Table 3. The effectiveness of the teaching methods I employed

The wording that was most reflected:	Scenes in order with no mistakes	Scenes in order with 1 mistake	Scenes in order with 2 mistakes	Scenes in order with 3 mistakes	Scenes in order with 4 or more mistakes	Totals
Hand Motions	7	5	8	8	6	34
Lecture-Outline	13	7	5	4	5	34
Combination of Hand Motions and Outline	7	1	1	1	1	11

The results suggest that just as many people benefited from the outline as from the hand motions. I somehow found that surprising. Maybe the outline teaches as well as the motions do even though so many people raved about how fun the motions are to perform. Learning does not necessarily require fun. I would like to do more research on this point.

Even more curiously and surprising to me, those who got all the scenes right without an error were much more likely to have learned my scenes from the outline by

almost two to one. I have no explanation for this. These facts make me realize that I am an amateur in knowing how people learn. I plan to read more on how people learn and design my teaching more intentionally.

2. Comprehend a rudimentary outline of key events and personages in the story of the Old Testament: Given three lists of five Bible events or characters, participants will attempt immediately following the seminar to put each list in Biblical order so that 50% of the participants are correct in their placement of at least 9 of the 15 events or characters (60% correct) and that 25% of participants will get at least 12 of 15 (80% correct). (This is in recognition that with matching questions, if a person gets one out of order, they often have two incorrect answers.)

With a slightly different quiz at the Christian Life Conference, the same goals of 60% and 80% will be scores of 10 or 13 respectively.

This goal deals with the proficiency of participants in placing events and characters of the Old Testament in order immediately following the conclusion of the seminar.

What were the results? In the pre-tests of the two conferences combined, 57 of 80 people (71.3%) met the 60% goal and 42 of 80 (52.5%) reached the 80% goal. In the post-tests of the two conferences, 60 of 67 (89.5%) got at least 60% correct and 45 of 67 (67.2%) scored at least 80% correct.

Goal 2 was met.

3. Given three lists of five Bible events or characters, participants will attempt to put them in Biblical order both immediately before I begin to teach and then immediately after I teach, it is hoped that 25-50% of participants will

demonstrate improvement even if the final score is below the 80% goal in statement 2 (above). Goal 3 aims for improvement.

Based on the pre-test and post-test scores listed above under Goal 2, my participants improved their understanding of Old Testament chronology by attending my seminar.

I tried to look at it in another way. At Wee Kirk, 56 attendees took both the before and after quiz. Of that number, thirteen had perfect scores on the pre-test. Of the remaining 43 people, 27 (62.8%) improved their scores on the post-test. They did so by an average of 2.8 pts.

Goal 3 was met.

4. Recognize that in the Big Picture, one story unites the stories of the Old Testament: Given an Old Testament Bible story (Gen 38 and/or 1 Kings 11); participants will try to demonstrate to someone else in the workshop how the particular story relates to Big Picture of the Bible. Participants will discuss this with one or two other participants for a few minutes and then some will communicate their thoughts to the whole workshop.

This goal was harder to measure. I did not have time to do this at the CLC, since I had at least 15 fewer minutes to teach. At the Wee Kirk, however, it seemed to me that most or all of the two or three person groups understood how the individual story became easier to comprehend when it was seen in the light of the Big Picture. Almost every group had at least one person who saw that these stories had implications which bear on the coming of the Messiah. This is what I hoped for and so I consider that goal 4 was met.

At the Wee Kirk, I asked participants to designate on the back of their quiz whether they were male or female and also to mark if they were an ordained elder, pastor or a Commissioned Lay Preacher. A Commissioned Lay Preacher (CLP) is an ordained elder who has also been certified to preach in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Some CLPs preach every Sunday for a small congregation which cannot afford to hire an ordained minister. Other CLPs preach on a “pulpit supply” basis, filling in here and there when a congregation’s regular pastor has taken a Sunday off.

All groups improved their understanding of the Big Picture of the Old Testament after participating in my seminar.

Table 4. Before and after performance in placing OT events in order

Group types	Number in the group	Average pre-test score	Average post-test score	Average improvement	Average percentage improvement
Women	25	8.8	12.0	3.2	36.3 %
Men	24	12.2	13.2	1.0	8.2 %
Elders	18	9.8	13.1	3.3	33.7 %
CLP	8	12.5	13.0	0.5	4.0 %
Pastors	9	13.3	14.5	1.2	9.0 %
Total for all participants	49	10.4	12.5	2.1	20.2 %

Every group improved their scores. I was very gratified to see this.

In the future I would like to publish this Big Picture of the Old Testament as a booklet or an internet tool. I would try to make the wording of the outline and the hand motions to be more nearly alike. It also occurred to me that people often remember scripture when it is in a song. I would like to write a song of the words of the hand motions and set it to a catchy tune that all Christians already know. I am not sure what that tune will be yet. I also would like to develop a preaching series so that pastors will have a resource that helps them to preach in the way they want their parishioners to read the Bible.

APPENDIX

ADAPTATION OF TECHNIQUES PIONEERED BY WALK THRU THE BIBLE MINISTRIES

Dr. Haddon Robinson suggested that I look into the ministry of “Walk Thru the Bible” and see what they do to teach people in their Old or New Testaments overview seminars. Never having had the opportunity to attend their overviews, I called a friend, Rev. Paul Toms from the First Presbyterian Church of Norristown, Pa., who has sponsored a Walk Thru the Bible overview at his church. He had a very good impression of the seminar and believed that his congregation had benefited from the experience.

“There is only one key thing that distinguishes a Walk Thru the Bible seminar from some other Bible overviews,” he told me, “and that is their physical activity. They get people to move. The audience is on their feet a lot. The movements are hand signs and whole body motions and they are connected to phrases. They teach a series of phrases—and there 77 of them. Each phrase has its own distinct motion. The phrases with their motions form an outline or timeline of the entire Old Testament. And they use repetition to reinforce what people have learned.”

Paul continued, “The motions help people recall the words and to cement words more than pictures or slides do. You march through the Red Sea to imprint the hand sign. They make and keep a memory there. I know that I can recall the words to the child’s song “This Little Light of Mine” when I start to perform the motions. I raise my index finger and sing “This little light of mine.” I cover that finger with the other hand and the words “Hide it under a bushel? No!” comes to mind. I make a blowing noise and the

words “Won’t let Satan blow it out” next come to mind. Didn’t you just picture those things on the other end of this phone call? We, in the church, only use those types of motions with small children and not with teens and adults because we assume that people beyond the childhood years will think they are silly and won’t do them. But the motions help a person recall the words. They trigger a person’s memory. And that is how they get people to learn an outline of the Old Testament that has over 70 parts to it. They learn the hand signs and motions and once you stand up and start speaking and moving, the signs come back to you in a remarkable way. That is the distinctive thing about Walk Thru the Bible.”

Then Paul suggested, “You should make up your own hand motions.”

“Yes, I guess I could,” I said, “but I would not have so many since I do not have five hours but only an hour and a quarter at the Wee Kirk.”

“Of course, Paul replied, “but make up good motions for your major points.”

I then related my major points to him

“You could go to Burger King and see if they still give out the paper crowns and use one for David and the united kingdom era.”

“OK, I will make up hand motions and teach them to my seminar.”

But when I got off the phone I realized that I could not get 30 paper crowns from a Burger King for one session. And if I do it would be a one time thing. How will I keep getting paper crowns in the future? If I only get one and put it one for my students to see did not seem to be what Paul taught me about Walk Thru the Bible. No, the participants need to do each motion for themselves. It occurred to me that the simplest and easiest way was for the participants and me to just use our hands and bodies. That way it is

easier for me and anyone teaching from this project. We will not have too many materials to lug around. And people's hands are always handy! They will be able to repeat the motions any where if they have no props but only employ their hands and bodies.

As I pictured a crown the thing that I thought of first was the roundness, the circularity of a crown more so than its design or its height or if it thin or thick or flat on top or rises into spikes but just that it is round and sits on a person's head like a ring that our heads wear. That's when I pictured making a crown with my hands. I actually stopped typing and made my hands come together to form a crown and then I put the "crown" on my head. I realized that the way I perform that motion counts too. The "crown" should be put on in a smooth, regal and stately manner. His Royal Majesty has just been crowned! Do not make a motion like someone flipping on their ball cap.

Then I broke the crown in two by holding up my hands still shaped like the crown but now no longer together. That would stand for the end of the United Kingdom of Israel and its fracture into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. I had invented my first two hand motions: the motions for scenes 5 and 6.

For 'Creation,' a flower springs up. I confess that Aslan singing Narnia into existence from *The Magician's Nephew* came to mind. The "Fall" would be represented by the flower falling over.

"Then suitcase in hand; Abraham looking for a new land" came next. The looking motion was easy. Put your hand up to your forehead and make sure you are looking a long, long way off. Abraham carried whatever belongings he took with him from Ur and then Haran or it was packed on an animal. It captures the sense of Abraham moving as a nomad for most of his life and never really possessing the land that was promised to him

and his descendants as it is portrayed in scripture. I hoped the rhyme would also aid in memory retention.

Then came “Egypt—Shackles on; Exodus—Shackles off—Ten Commandments.” I hoped that the alliteration of Egypt and Exodus would make it easier to remember. And it just seemed natural that as a person holds up their free and unshackled hands that spreading apart their fingers could stand for the Ten Commandments.

Pulling out a sword and holding it up could stand for Joshua’s conquests.

As for the book of Judges and the refrain “there was no king in Israel,” I came up with “Thanks for the robe, Judge but we need a king.” The robe is a pun but Paul Toms said that Walk Thru the Bible (WTTB) uses quite a bit of corny humor and puns. Therefore, I concluded that I could include a pun every now and then.

Now for the latter scenes. I left off with ‘crown broken’ for Scene 6. The next major scene in my project is the exile. I repeated the putting on shackles motion again. I would have people say “Chains Again?!?” Maybe the two shackles motions for Exodus and later exile will serve as bookends and make both more memorable. One ‘putting on shackles’ motion being near the beginning and the other one coming near the end. I hoped that maybe **EX**-odus (scene 3) will help them remember **EX**-ile (scene 7), the two big travel narratives of the people of God in the Old Testament, the two times when some place other than Canaan moves to center stage after the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.

Now I had my hand motions. I was thankful that I did not know how WTTB does their hand motions. I liked their idea but I wanted my motions to be original. I did not want to copy what someone else has already done for both ethical and legal reasons. I could not rightfully copy their exact motions but the idea of doing motions at all can not

be their exclusive intellectual property. I subsequently have found what the WTTB Old Testament hand motions are. Several people have put them on YouTube. The two which are the easiest to hear and comprehend are: “Walk thru Bible with Ross”¹ and “Walk thru Bible with Farokhian”²

In researching the WTTB website, I saw that they also use the room in which the seminar is being held as a large map. Paul Toms had not mentioned that. It may be that this is a new aspect that WTTB is adding to their seminars. They want the people to ‘visualize’ a map. There are no maps on the wall or handouts. The point is to use the room as a map so that people can visualize the geography of Canaan as well as where it is in relation to Egypt and Mesopotamia. In their instructions to sponsoring churches, the WTTB people prefer the room to be arranged with “two aisles with seating on all sides.”³ One of their promotional videos at their website shows an instructor in a room with two aisles. He tells the people on his far right, “You folks are the Mediterranean. Can you give us a wave?”

The people wave to the instructor.

He responds, “Can’t you see the waves on the Mediterranean?”

It seems that the WTTB people like corny humor!

I will prefer just one aisle down the middle to be the Jordan River. The aisle near me is the Jordan. The end of the aisle could be the Dead Sea. The Mediterranean can be the wall to my far right since no major action occurs on the sea in the course of the Old

¹ Youtube Web site, “Walk thru Bible with Ross,” uploaded March 5, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPrxjt27G24&feature=related> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

² Youtube Web site, “Walk thru Bible with Farokhian” uploaded December 19, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICXXJ7DZv7A&feature=related> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

³ Walk Thru the Bible, “Event Coordinator’s Guide,” <http://walkthru.org/host-timeline/619-event-hosting-event-coordinator-guide#InstructorFacilities> (accessed Sept. 28, 2011).

Testament (only Jonah's story involves the Sea and Jonah will likely not be mentioned in a 90 minute overview. The rest I will explain in chapter 4 or 5.

From all that I have learned in my reading, research and thinking about the most effective ways to teach the Big Picture of the Old Testament as well as all that went before that in the Preacher and the Message track of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I have concluded that my presentation should respect the following points:

I need a good one sentence Big Idea of the Bible (per Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching*⁴). See the last page of chapter two for that sentence.

I need a good summary sentence/paragraph at the end of my presentation. It should summarize what I covered as well as leave the end of the Old Testament in tension (per *Made to Stick*⁵)

I need to be simple, concise without distorting the text and concrete. I must have the essentials but maybe only the essentials.

The use of a simple clear Old Testament map will help. It could be projected on the wall or a physical map could rest on an easel. I could also use the room as a map. This will hopefully help people grasp the physical place where the Old Testament story occurred.

I should stress the key individuals, the 'Players' such as Abraham, Moses and David. Do not spend time on minor figures in the Big Picture.

⁴ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001).

⁵ Chip and Dan Heath, *Made To Stick* (New York: Random House, 2007).

Even though my time will be short, I must work in repetition. For instance, I cannot teach the hand motions once or twice and then expect that people have already learned them.

Walk Thru the Bible is great at using kinesthetic learning. But they seem to use it exclusively. They promise, in their promotional material, that their seminars have “no lectures or note taking.” Looking at their promotional material has convinced me to employ hand motions and other interactive and kinesthetic techniques. However, I will not ignore the other learning styles and will also lecture and give notes. I will use a handout with a few of the elements blank for listeners to fill in.

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